

# *Horizon*

A REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND ART

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**'JE SUIS GUILLAUME APOLLINAIRE'**

*by* CECILY MACKWORTH

**WHERE SHALL JOHN GO? VII—EGYPT**

*by* ROBIN FEDDEN

**GEORGE MOORE AND MODERN ART**

*by* DOUGLAS COOPER

**NEITHER GOD NOR DEVIL**

*by* JACQUES B. BRUNIUS

POEMS *by* W. J. TURNER, JOHN BETJEMAN, DYLAN THOMAS,  
HARRY BROWN, GEORGE BARKER, VERNON WATKINS,  
C. H. JOHNSTON, PIERRE JEAN JOUVE, JOCELYN BROOKE,  
BERNARD GUTTERIDGE

REVIEWS *by* ANNA KAVAN

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*Edited by Cyril Connolly*

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# HORIZON

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## CONTENTS

PAGE

WORDS AND IDEAS	<i>W. J. Turner</i>	79
A PLAIN COURSE ON THE BELLS	<i>John Betjeman</i>	81
POEM IN OCTOBER	<i>Dylan Thomas</i>	82
PERHAPS FOR A CENOTAPH	<i>Harry Brown</i>	84
'WHERE THE KISSING SYSTEMS TURN'	<i>George Barker</i>	84
HOME	<i>Vernon Watkins</i>	85
ABSTRACT OF PERSIA	<i>C. H. Johnston</i>	86
THE HATCHERY	<i>C. H. Johnston</i>	86
TAPESTRY OF THE APPLE-TREE	<i>Pierre Jean Jouve</i>	87
SEASIDE, 1942	<i>Jocelyn Brooke</i>	88
JOHANNESBURG	<i>Bernard Gutteridge</i>	89
'JE SUIS GUILLAUME APOLLINAIRE'	<i>Cecily Mackworth</i>	90
WHERE SHALL JOHN GO?		
VII—EGYPT	<i>Robin Fedden</i>	104
GEORGE MOORE AND MODERN ART	<i>Douglas Cooper</i>	113
NEITHER GOD NOR DEVIL	<i>Jacques B. Brunius</i>	130
SELECTED NOTICES:		
ENGLISH STORY	} <i>Anna Kavan</i>	143
THE WINDMILL		
THE BALLAD AND THE SOURCE		
IN TYRANNOS		

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**A MACMILLAN AUTHOR**

## ***Storm Jameson***

Storm Jameson was born in Whitby, Yorkshire, graduating from Leeds University with First Class Honours in English Language and Literature. She was awarded a John Ruskin research fellowship at London University, and took an M.A. degree for a thesis on Modern Drama in Europe, which was published in 1920. Her approach to novel writing was made through a variety of occupations. She was driven in 1919 to earn a living as a copywriter in a large advertising firm. She became the editor of a weekly paper called *The New Commonwealth*, and when this ceased publication, she began to represent in England an American Publisher.

Meanwhile her novels began to appear. The better-known are *That Was Yesterday*, *A Day Off*, *Europe To Let*, *Cousin Honore* and *The Fort*.

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## WORDS AND IDEAS

With words not ideas is poetry made,  
But what is a word? say the word, sword?  
It is not the sound, it is not the look,  
It is not even the image of the keen bright blade  
Of the hero who from the fairyland page of a book  
Shook dew-shattered sleep from the Princess found.

Is sleep just a word? Come charmèd Sleep  
That rocks the ship-boy on the giddy mast  
And smoothes the waves to lulling melodies  
Too fast! Too fast! we rush to lits not ours  
For sleep's a too melodious hive of honey  
Pillow to Paradise stuffed with singing powers.

Is 'Paradise'—yes, is it not a word?  
Only a word? Or pure idea by life unparallel'd?  
'Meet me in Paradise.' Is it an Inn  
In Greenwich Village, providing bed-and-board?  
And 'board', so bed-and-breakfasted—  
Surely in Paradise no one has ever dwelled:

All hands aboard! What magic changed that word?  
Sea-faring men are naïve and full of hope:  
Poor Tom Australia-bound for stealing sheep;  
Nothing of him by relatives was heard,  
He dropped one night unnoticed overboard,  
By starlight, crossing the Great Australian Bight.

From the high Southern Cross there hangs a rope,  
Pricked on a sailor's back in brightest blue,  
Up which imagination climbing the globe  
Remembers Palinurus, oarsman too,  
Who dropped, in Virgil, also in starlight deep,  
And, like poor Tom, unnoticed by the crew.

Is Landfall near? The famed Hesperides—  
How far are they? How soft the Western breeze!  
Too soft, too mild, too rain-bedewed; let's flit  
Like screaming gull to sulphur-cindered Aetna  
Nor let, in night's dark rags, lightning-tattered roll  
Into the shore one single rock-cracked skull.

Only the bone can tell, flesh smooth as peach  
Surf-softer flowers, insidious-soft as lies,  
Dissolving ocean-murmurs, not the hard wave  
And splintered keel of skeletoned mariners  
Who bite, flesh gone, the beach salt-bitter stone,  
• Socket and teeth sunk to their pebbled grave.

Wordless and riddle-hard the skull of man,  
It will not wash away, it tells us nothing,  
Nothing at all. How soft the pelt of pard  
By the warm fireside—panther or spotted leopard,  
The fur-like purring fire, friendly, soothing,  
Soft, soothing words in their nothingness consuming.

Landfall now here! Here where a Spirit sitting  
Takes up its skull, looks at its smitten teeth,  
Its barest meaning, here is poetry  
Here where there are no words, wash of flesh-confusion,  
Only the ultimate It, result of the Spirit's smiting  
Man-anvil, at last motionless, shell-like and without breath.



J. BETJEMAN

## A PLAIN COURSE ON THE BELLS

1 2 2 4 4 5 5 3 3 1 1  
2 1 4 2 5 4 3 5 1 3 2  
3 4 1 5 2 3 4 1 5 2 3  
4 3 5 1 3 2 1 4 2 5 4  
5 5 3 3 1 1 2 2 4 4 5

Green upon the flooded Avon shone the after-storm-wet sky,  
Quick the struggling withy branches let the leaves of Autumn fly  
And a star shone over Bristol, wonderfully far and high.

Ringers in an oil-lit belfry—Bitton? Kelston? who shall say?—  
Smoothly practising a Plain Course, caverned out the dying day  
As their melancholy music flooded up and ebbed away.

Then all Somerset was round me and I saw the clippers ride,  
High among the moonlit houses, triple-masted on the tide,  
By the tall embattled church towers of the Bristol waterside.

And an undersong to branches dripping into pools and wells  
Out of multitudes of elm trees over leagues of hills and dells  
Was the mathematic pattern of a Plain Course on the bells.

*Bristol, October*

DYLAN THOMAS  
POEM IN OCTOBER

It was my thirtieth year to heaven  
Woke to my hearing from harbour and neighbour wood  
And the mussel pooled and the heron  
Priested shore  
The morning beckon  
With water praying and call of seagull and rook  
And the knock of sailing boats on the net-webbed wall  
Myself to set foot  
That second  
In the still sleeping town and set forth.

My birthday began with the water—  
Birds and the birds of the winged trees flying my name  
Above the farms and the white horses  
And I rose  
In rainy autumn  
And walked abroad in a shower of all my days.  
High tide and the heron dived when I took the road  
Over the border  
And the gates  
Of the town closed as the town awoke.

A springful of larks in a rolling  
Cloud and the roadside bushes brimming with whistling  
Blackbirds and the sun of October  
Summery  
On the hill's shoulder,  
Here were fond climates and sweet singers suddenly  
Come in the morning where I wandered and listened  
To the rain wringing  
Wind blow cold  
In the wood faraway under me.

Pale rain over the dwindling harbour  
And over the sea-wet church the size of a snail  
With its horns through mist and the castle  
Brown as owls,

But all the gardens  
Of spring and summer were blooming in the tall tales  
Beyond the border and under the lark-full cloud.

There could I marvel  
My birthday  
Away but the weather turned around.

It turned away from the blithe country,  
And down the other air and the blue altered sky  
Streamed again a wonder of summer

With apples  
Pears and red currants,  
And I saw in the turning so clearly a child's  
Forgotten mornings when he walked with his mother  
Through the parables  
Of sun light  
And the legends of the green chapels

And the twice told fields of infancy  
That his tears burned my cheeks and his heart moved in mine.  
These were the woods the river and sea

Where a boy  
In the listening  
Summertime of the dead whispered the truth of his joy  
To the trees and the stones and the fish in the tide.

And the mystery  
Sang alive  
Still in the water and singing birds.

And there could I marvel my birthday  
Away but the weather turned around. And the true  
Joy of the long-dead child sang burning  
In the sun.

It was my thirtieth  
Year to heaven stood there then in the summer noon  
Though the town below lay leaved with October blood.

O may my heart's truth  
Still be sung  
On this high hill in a year's turning.

HARRY BROWN

PERHAPS FOR A CENOTAPH

Return, O you white wanderers, return,  
Pale shrouded ghosts, invaders of the silence,  
Who rose as doves rise from a shock of voices,  
And entered the horizon.

Memory wavers  
Like tapers fixed in a dusty room  
And, even as they, devours itself and dies.

GEORGE BARKER

‘WHERE THE KISSING SYSTEMS  
TURN’

Where the kissing systems turn  
Arm in arm across the sky,  
And the sleepless years return  
Worn and weary to their high  
Stations in astronomy:

There, shaking water at parallax,  
Lolling light along distances,  
The morning lets the stars relax  
And makes a magic among tenses:  
Love rises from her bed of senses.

The systems, wheeling in degrees,  
Speak in eternal vocables:  
‘The heart, in all its allegories,  
Shall always walk the stellar allies  
Clasping an astrolabe of troubles.’

Thus, crosswise on antinomies,  
The angel and the anthropoid,  
The wrongs and the responsibilities,—  
Making love across a void  
Kiss in a shower of pities.

VERNON WATKINS

## HOME

*(Translated from Hoelderlin)*

Glad steers the sailor home to the quiet stream  
From far-off islands, when he has harvested.  
So would I, too, come home, if I had  
Harvested riches to vie with sorrow.

You faithful shores, forsaken, that nursed me once,  
Will you still the sorrows of love, will you promise me,  
You forests of my youth, if I  
Come, the peace of the heart once more?

At the cool brook where I watched the play of waves,  
The river where I gazed at the gliding ships,  
There, soon, I'll be; you dearest mountains,  
You that protected me once, the home's

Honoured, inviolate boundaries, my mother's house,  
And loving embraces, brothers' and sister's arms,  
I feel them soon, and you surround me  
That, as in bonds, my heart be healed:

You true, you steadfast ones! but I know, I know,  
The wound of love, this cannot so quickly heal,  
This no cradle-song mortals pitying  
Sing to the comfortless, drives from my breast.

For they, the gods, who lend us the heavenly fire,  
This holy sorrow also impart to us.  
So let it be. A son of Earth  
Am I: to love I was formed, to grieve.



C. H. JOHNSTON  
ABSTRACT OF PERSIA

Horizon of bony saddles salt with snow.  
Snow rubbed in all the pleats of the brown foothills,  
Rump of the meatless backbone range of Media.  
Inkblue shadows of cloud at rest on the slopes,  
Bare, powdered birches and white boles of poplar,  
Slender as columns on the balconies  
Of the watergarten palaces of Isfahan.  
The glaucous torrent licking through the snowbeds,  
Sucking the boulders iced from winter's tube,  
Or tumbling where the tightening waterfall  
Holds the fine drawnwork in its formal grooves.  
And then, across the width of Kurdistan,  
Exposed in the sweep of the unwinding pass,  
Crusader castles of granite, plumbline-ruled,  
Hard, fluted mountains, carved in cuneiform  
With lapidary triumphs of the Achæmenids.

THE HATCHERY

The shallow conduit shakes in all  
Its breadth and feels the waterfall  
And lets the before-breakfast sun  
Light up the trout and, one by one,  
Project their shadows, damp and cold,  
Across a ground of leaves and mould.  
Smoky and plump are those that take  
The beams, and solid and opaque.  
Others that swim against the light  
Would tempt a fainter appetite,  
The flimsiest eating, frail as air  
And lucid as their watery lair,  
Succulent trout that bask and gleam  
And ride immobile head to stream:  
Edible shapes, sungrilled but cool,  
Caught in the aspic of the pool.

PIERRE JEAN JOUVE

## TAPESTRY OF THE APPLE-TREES

*Normandy, June 1944*

Gallop among the apple-trees white in the green land  
Horses of love horses of fire horses of iron

Tear in your armoured march the flesh from the carpet  
Of flowers and divide the town into two craters

Trample beneath the apple-trees blue in the green land  
Horses of fire horses of death horses of iron

Sunder the chain around a body and drip  
With blood with pain with gasoline sweat

Root up our apple-trees green in the brown land  
Horses of fire horses of love sea-come horses

Burst into gasoline grief exploding against  
A tremendous enemy slain: we have watched you passing

Sprung from the seas to finish the ancient wars  
Oh lovingly! and in man's heart liberty stirs

Gallop among the apple-trees bright in the green land  
Horses of death horses of love horses of earth

We will lay the dead whom you leave in our rooms of honour  
And heap them with sweet peas and the field's long grasses

Trample among the apple-trees bare in the green land  
Horses of blood horses of mind horses of honour

Your dead shall be covered with flowers in the room of the heart  
While you pass on and beyond with enormous thunder

When the sky vibrates and rumbles when the wind freshens.

*Translated by* GEOFFREY BRERETON

From *Fontaine*, No. 36

## JOCELYN BROOKE

### SEASIDE, 1942

Barbed wire on the beaches  
And soldiers watching the skyline  
From the ruined esplanade—  
And inland, the abandoned huts,  
And the desolate reaches where  
In peacetime summers  
The fruit-stalls and the cafés made  
A gay ephemeral village, and where now  
Only the tough maritime weeds  
—Horned poppy and samphire and the tree-mallow—  
Impose their austere and curious  
Patterns upon the scene, and bind  
The shifting sand and pebbles to resist  
The encroaching tide.  
And the soldier watching the sea  
Turns landward to rest his distance-dazzled  
Eyes, and remarks the derelict huts, the deserted  
Street of grey houses beyond the shingle,  
And thinks: *I am fighting for this country.*  
And something seems to have gone wrong—  
The facts refuse to fit  
His neat and derivative preconceptions,  
And turning back to the sea  
—Hungry and tired, and bored  
With the effort of thought—he gives it up.  
And the wind blows up from the marshes  
Cold with unshed rain  
And sings in the ragged tamarisks, and shakes  
The shattered windows of the empty café—  
And the soldier wishes himself back again  
In his warm unreal dream of Civvy Street  
(*Roll on Christmas and let's have some nuts*):  
Being scarcely aware that Civvy Street  
Is the grey abandoned houses  
Behind the esplanade, the empty teashop,  
The bombed chapel and the shops boarded up;

Unable to recognize the insidious  
Future slowly impinging upon the present  
Like the tough and salty weeds that overrun  
And gradually possess  
The foreshore and the subsiding débris of  
The summer camp: for the indolent mind—  
Half-doped with Orders and the Forces Programme—  
Cannot connect, is able to see only  
The small world lit by the flickering match,  
The discrete and unrelated fragments of  
An unperceived continuum... And the shoulders twitch,  
The foot taps out a rhythm, the loose lips  
Frame a few syncopated bars, and the eyes  
Fix their blank stare  
Once more on the grey distance, where  
The clouds sag, heavy with menace, over  
The darkened lands of Europe and  
The soldier's future.

## BERNARD GUTTERIDGE

### JOHANNESBURG

Gold smothers Johannesburg. Everthing—  
Whisky and sun and dust and clouds—is gold.  
The gold slag heaps are backscene mountains  
Encircling now this racecourse and its crowd.  
Jacaranda trees blaze bright blue lanterns, colour

Caresses colour, violet with orange sleeves, striped cap;  
Greys, chestnuts, pink tickets in lapels;  
Buttercup golden jacket holds a minute jockey.  
Slender girls enchant their rainbow dresses.  
Then the white tapes fly and the line flames

And twenty horses batter down the straight,  
Oh gold wins always by a length  
Among the green trees pulling to a canter,  
Walk back among the gardens of the paddock;  
On the gay silks the gold sun's friendly banter.

CECILY MACKWORTH  
'JE SUIS GUILLAUME  
APOLLINAIRE'

FEW poets have possessed more completely than Guillaume Apollinaire that attribute of genius which consists in being acutely aware of its own epoch. He succeeded almost completely in getting the 'feel' of his times, and it was his tragedy and not his fault that those times came to a violent end before he himself reached middle age.

Wilhelm de Kostrowitzki, who became Guillaume Apollinaire, was born in 1880—that is to say, when the influence of Baudelaire was at its height and when the élite of Paris was gathering every Tuesday in the apartment of the rue de Rome to hear Mallarmé expounding the doctrines of Symbolism. He was a baby during one of the great periods of French literature, yet by the turn of the century, when he was twenty years old, it had become evident that Romanticism had reached its final decadence, that Mallarmé had achieved a perfection which was in itself a kind of death, and indeed that death had become the real matter of art, that horror and beauty, love and cruelty, had become inextricably mixed, so that the *fin de siècle* has come to stand for a second Byzantium, 'a kind of mythical age of pornographic literature, with sexual ichthyosauri and palaeosauri, caprices à la Goya and incubi à la Rops'.<sup>1</sup> Apollinaire accepted the 'decadent' truth of the intricate intermingling of pleasure and pain, but gave it a new and more positive interpretation. He was as interested as anyone in Byzantine ichthyosauri and palaeosauri, only for him they were part of the enchanting bric-à-brac of life and not a final symbol of life merging with death. He did not destroy the phenomena of the late nineteenth century, but rearranged them and put them into a new perspective—the perspective of the twentieth century.

Apollinaire's preface to the collected poems of Baudelaire shows how sharply he was conscious of the beginning of a new epoch. 'De cette œuvre,' he writes, 'nous avons rejeté le côté moral qui

<sup>1</sup> Mario Praz: *The Romantic Agony*.



nous faisait tort en nous forçant d'envisager la vie et les choses avec un certain dilettantisme pessimiste dont nous ne sommes plus dupes. Baudelaire regardait la vie et les œuvres avec une passion dégoûtée qui visait à transformer arbres, fleurs, femmes, l'univers tout entier et l'art même en quelque chose de pernicieux. C'était sa marotte et non la saine réalité.'

Apollinaire's vast and still only half-recognized importance lies in the fact that he was, in himself, a sort of incarnation of the new epoch which began during the first decade of this century, an epoch which rejected the 'passion dégoûtée' of Baudelaire and the negative, Symbolist attitude towards life, and applied itself to a search for the 'saine réalité' which would be revealed once it became possible to study a given object—or life itself—from all angles at once, with 'le souci de rendre sensibles toutes les faces d'un objet à la fois', which André Salmon describes as the principal preoccupation of Cubism.

Apollinaire was the personification of Cubism, and Cubism was undoubtedly one of the turning points in the spiritual history of Europe. 'Movements' in art do not grow up without a reason. They are not fungi on the surface of the life of a society, but a real expression of its deepest needs, *felt* unconsciously by the masses, but understood and translated into art forms by its intellectuals. Europe needed Cubism, so Cubism came, and Guillaume Apollinaire was Cubism. Metzinger's extraordinary 'decomposed' portrait of him, one of the first experiments in the new medium and which provoked violent attacks and mockery because it had no apparent resemblance to its subject, was really the only way in which he could reasonably have been painted.

'Les grands poètes et les grands artistes', wrote Apollinaire in *Les Peintres Cubistes*, 'ont pour fonction sociale de renouveler sans cesse l'apparence que revêt la nature aux yeux des hommes. Sans les poètes, sans les artistes, les hommes s'ennuieraient vite de leur monotonie naturelle. L'idée sublime qu'ils ont de l'univers retomberait avec une vitesse vertigineuse. L'ordre qui paraît dans la nature et qui n'est qu'un effet de l'art s'évanouirait aussitôt.' It was the problem of perceiving new and unsuspected aspects of nature and establishing new and constantly interchanging relationships between those aspects, the factor of space, the search for a fourth dimension, which constituted the adventure of Cubism.

During his first years in Paris, Apollinaire had been a close friend of Alfred Jarry, the creator of Père Ubu, the 'Surmâle' and arch-debunker. Jarry had once said that life was like a walled city. If you lived inside the walls, and looked over them at the country beyond, you were perceiving only an incomplete and circumscribed image of reality. But if you destroyed the walls and razed them to the ground so that the city became a part of the surrounding landscape, you got quite a different view and a much truer one. Jarry had been too destructive, too much identified with Byzantium and death to retain his ascendancy over Apollinaire, but the conception of the breaking up of the old, formal perspectives in order to perceive life in its full reality, passed over into Cubism. It became part of the poetry of Apollinaire, Max Jacob and André Salmon and, on a more technical plane, led Picasso and the other Cubist painters to ignore the ordinary rules of perspective and 'decompose' the various elements in a picture, in order to show its real, inner meaning.

At the same time, since it was the artist's mission to create an order in nature, out of all its elements, the Cubists made a clean sweep of all the established paraphernalia of art. The classic motive was abolished and, instead of certain chosen subjects being considered the proper matter of poetry and painting, *all* subjects, even the most humble, the least classic, the least romantic, were gathered into the artist's net. Art was at last ready to incorporate the whole of life, and everything which set it apart, or tended to keep it as a reserve for the élite, was to be destroyed. 'Good Taste' was one of the shibboleths which set painting and literature apart from real life; 'Permanence' was another. That is the reason why, in the early, experimental stage of Cubism, scraps of newspaper, pieces of material, bits of patterned wallpaper, sand and string were all incorporated into certain pictures. Since art was to be brought within range of the poor and humble, it must not disdain poor and humble materials.

For instance, it was during the early Cubist years that the machine began to invade private life. Baudelaire and the Symbolists had viewed with horror, almost with nausea, the growth of the industrial era, and had fled from it into the enchanted retreats of the mind. The imagination became the only channel, apart from suicide, by which an artist could escape from the intolerable encroachments of modern life. No one, before Picasso

and Apollinaire, had considered that the very apparatus of this industrialized, anti-poetic age, might itself become part of the matter of poetry and painting.

It had been taken for granted that the artist should hate and despise the machine. Apollinaire and his friends, on the contrary, adored it. They were fascinated by the strange new shapes and the strange new functions. For them, a sewing-machine was not less beautiful than a sunset. Furthermore, to admit the existence of the sunset and deny the existence of the sewing-machine seemed to them a ludicrous distortion of truth, an attempt to tuck art away under a glass dome and make it into a museum object with no relation to life.

It was the complete identification between the vital new discoveries which were being made by painters and writers, and the personality of Apollinaire, which made his influence so widespread and profound. It does not matter whether he developed the theories which he expounded in *Les Peintres Cubistes* after seeing the experiments in painting made by Picasso, Picabia, Juan Gris and their friends or whether these painters were fired by Apollinaire's theories to apply them to painting. The point is that Cubism, in essence and disregarding all the technicalities which are primarily the concern of painters, represents the acceptance of life in its completest sense, and probably no poet has ever accepted life more joyously and more completely than did Guillaume Apollinaire. When he cries out, 'Je suis ivre d'avoir bu tout l'univers', he means exactly what he says. Not part of the universe, not the beauty of the world, nor its wisdom, not its physical aspect, nor its spiritual aspect, but the whole universe at one Gargantuan gulp.

Ecoutez-moi je suis le gosier de Paris  
Et je boirai encore s'il me plaît l'univers  
Ecoutez mes chansons d'universelle ivrognerie

Apollinaire was not only able to swallow the whole universe without getting indigestion, but he was, in himself, a whole universe. His personality seemed to include a thousand personalities often to the great bewilderment of his friends. 'Il se redoublait ou se dédoublait selon les jours et les amis,' wrote one of them. 'Ces orientations désorientées, ces volte-face, ces extraordinaires concordances n'avaient pratiquement point de limites.' These constant chameleon changes, these reflections of his changing

company and background, are the reason why, although so many of his contemporaries are alive, it is almost impossible to get a complete portrait of Apollinaire the man. Each one of them has a story so different, so contradictory, that one begins to ask oneself whether he was not indulging in deliberate mystifications—until one remembers that all these stories, all these aspects, have a reflection in his work.

There is Apollinaire the scholar with an immense store of knowledge on almost every conceivable subject, gained from the Bibliothèque Nationale during the years when he earned his living by 'ghosting' for eminent and parasitical men of letters. There is the Apollinaire of the pornographic novels, *La Fin de Babylone* and *La Rome des Borgias*, the editor of the erotic works of Pietro Aretino; the revolutionary Apollinaire who had been a disciple of Jarry, assisted at the birth of *Père Ubu*, admired the Marquis de Sade, and insisted, against the advice of everyone who knew anything about publishing, on calling the review on which he had set such great hopes, *La Revue Immoraliste*. There is the pure and pious Apollinaire who never quite broke loose from the teaching of the Jesuits at the Collège of Monaco where:

Tu es très pieux et avec le plus ancien de tes camarades René  
Dalize

Vous n'aimez rien tant que les pompes de l'Eglise  
Il est neuf heures le gaz est baissé tout bleu vous sortez du  
dortoir en cachette

Vous priez toute la nuit dans la chapelle du collège  
Tandis qu'éternelle et adorable profondeur améthyste  
Tourne à jamais la flamboyante gloire du Christ

and who remains unquiet, eternally devoured by religious scruples:

Entourée de flammes ferventes Notre-Dame m'a regardé à  
Chartres

Le sang de votre Sacré-Cœur m'a inondé à Montmartre  
Je suis malade d'ouïr les paroles bienheureuses

L'amour dont je souffre est une maladie honteuse  
Et l'image qui te possède te fait survivre dans l'insomnie et  
dans l'angoisse

C'est toujours près de toi cette image qui passe.

Or again, there is Apollinaire the good soldier, the patriot, determined to gain a commission, scrupulous in his military

duties, volunteering for the army because war is a part of life and life must be experienced to the full.

It is no good asking oneself which is the truth. Truth is everywhere and the only thing to do is to regard Apollinaire with a Cubist eye and as little selectiveness as he showed throughout his own life.

There, I think, lies the key both to the man and the poet. Other men have been as many-sided and the nature of a poet is generally full of contradictions, but the special genius of Apollinaire consists in his capacity for fulfilling himself completely in his work, in utilizing every possible aspect of himself and expressing every facet of that innumerable many-sided character in words which follow easily and inevitably the rhythm of his own metamorphoses. Here there is no chasm between the poet and the man, since, for Apollinaire, life was poetry and poetry was life, and nothing was to be suppressed from either poetry or life. For him there was never any question of making a choice between his many talents or of finding his own line and sticking to it (a horrible phrase invented in some English public school and which has contaminated and corrupted English poets for the last fifty years). The 'decomposition' of his own nature seemed to him perfectly natural.

Apollinaire accepted himself with simplicity, a rich egoism and a thorough enjoyment of himself in every mood. It is true that he was constantly sorry for himself and unhappily in love for most of his life. Yet it never occurred to him to question the fundamental richness and joy of existence. Never for one instant could he have echoed the sigh of Jules Laforgue; 'Ah, que la vie est quotidienne!' Life might be tragic, grotesque, horrible; Marie Laurencin might clope to Germany with her Baltic Baron, he himself might be arrested and thrown into prison on suspicion of stealing the Mona Lisa from the Louvre, the trenches of Flanders might stink with the decaying corpses of his friends—but life could never be daily, never be other than passionately interesting.

How sorry he could be for himself! His poetry is sprinkled with sad little songs about the misery of his fate.

Je suis Guillaume Apollinaire  
Dit d'un nom slave pour vrai nom  
Ma vie est triste tout entière  
Un écho répond toujours non  
Lorsque je dis une prière.



And even here, through the melancholy of the lines, out bursts the affirmation of being, of living, of being part of life. He is infinitely conscious of himself as a person. He apostrophizes himself, adjures himself. One is constantly being checked by lines addressed to himself:

Un jour que je m'attendais moi-même,  
Je me disais Guillaume il est temps que tu viennes

He bangs on the table and insists again and again: 'Je suis Guillaume Apollinaire'. When he is really ashamed and heart-broken in prison he makes no attempt to 'arrange' his misery as poetry. He wants everyone to know that this is *him* suffering, not the poet in him, not the finer part of his nature, but he himself:

Avant d'entrer dans ma cellule  
Il a fallu me mettre nu  
Et quelle voix sinistre ulule  
Guillaume qu'es-tu devenu?

There is nothing accidental about this sort of thing. It could not have existed during the *fin de siècle* period. No one could imagine Baudelaire writing 'Je suis Charles Baudelaire'. Apollinaire's attitude of 'Je suis', has the same importance as a key to his work and to himself as Rimbaud's 'Je est un autre'.

In 1911 the *Mercure de France* published Apollinaire's first volume of collected poems under the title *Alcools* ('Ma vie que je bois comme une eau-de-vie'). The poems were written during the period when Apollinaire still felt that he and his friends had discovered in Cubism the final truth about life. They are young, vigorous, intensely personal and give a sort of reflection of all the influences under which he had lived; towns and countries visited in his wanderings, mistresses, friends, taverns, landscapes, legends—all bathed in a tender, truculent lyricism that has something of Heine, something of the Symbolists, something of Verlaine, in fact something of all the poets who had impressed him at various times of his life, yet every line so personal that no one, hearing it out of its context could fail to recognize instantly the authentic Apollinairian note.

In *Alcools*, Apollinaire introduced Cubism into poetry. Picasso and Picabia had attempted to translate into painting the space between a given object and the image which it evokes—the space

which represented for them the fugitive and infinitely desirable Fourth Dimension and of which the existence had first been suspected by Mallarmé who had suggested that 'Instituer une relation entre les images exactes, et que s'en détache un *tiers aspect* fusible et clair présente à la divination. . . .' Apollinaire, using words instead of paint, filled in this space with astonishing fantasies—the phantasms of fantasy—creating the constant element of surprise which seemed to him an integral part of beauty. The 'object' is invariably humble, popular and almost childish; the words and similes in no sense poetic in themselves. The poetry is implicit in the relationship between object and image. It propagates itself, absolutely unrestrained in the extraordinary no-man's-land in which neither boundaries nor conventions exist.

Jean Cocteau wrote recently that 'Apollinaire n'avait qu'à copier une affiche, un entrefilet de journal, un télégramme oublié au bureau de poste, immédiatement se produisait une métamorphose'. The key word, of course, is 'metamorphosis'. The poster, the newspaper paragraph and the forgotten telegram, have nothing to do with poetry in themselves. They go into the filter of the poet's mind, crude and undigested, and at some point in no-man's-land, they become metamorphized and reappear *more than themselves*, mystically endowed with a universal application. They are no longer the *menus objets* of contemporary life, but life itself transmuted into poetry. That is the real test of lyric poetry, the poetry which means more than it says, which creates its own climate. Apollinaire, who was first and last a lyric poet, simply proved that anything could go into the filter, provided that the filter was of sufficiently good quality. There was no need to select this or that as likely material; metamorphosis was a stronger magic than had been supposed.

Apollinaire, the lyric poet, has said certain things which are the final and inevitable crystallization of a certain mood. The mood may be as tenuous as a dream, a hair's-breadth balancing of joy and pain, but its special climate is there for ever, transfixed on the page with its printed words, simple, almost childlike, boisterous and tragic:

Sous le pont Mirabeau coule la Seine  
Et nos amours  
Faut-il qu'il m'en souvienne  
La joie venait toujours après la peine

or:  
 Un soir de demi-brume à Londres  
 Un voyou qui ressemblait à  
 Mon amour vint à ma rencontre  
 Et le regard qu'il me jeta  
 Me fit baisser les yeux de honte

The echo of Villon is instantly perceptible. Apollinaire's blood may have been Polish and Italian, but his voice was the voice of the French troubadours. His poems are songs of France, most of which are still waiting to be set to music, though the poems from *Le Bestiaire* have received their musical setting from his friend François Poulenc. Almost the whole of *Alcools* and many poems from *Caligrammes* seem to be made for the sort of recital that Francis Carco used to give in the *Lapin Agile* in 1937 and 1938. They are nearer to certain old, infinitely simple folk-songs like 'En revenant des Noces' or the lovely, timeless Vendéen song of the Six Lovers which ends,

Le sixième c'est un sonneur  
 C'est celui-là qu'aura mon cœur  
 Mon cœur et la boutique  
 Et nous irons de ville en ville  
 Sonnant de la musique. . . .

than to Mallarmé; far nearer to Villon than to Viélé-Griffin.

Fernand Fleuret has analysed some of the quality common between Villon and Apollinaire. '... les amours de hazard, la destinée laborieuse, le regret de la jeunesse, la fuite du temps, la paresse stérile, la mort, forment le meilleur de l'inspiration d'*Alcools* . . . Comme Villon, il rit en pleurs, il est roué et jobard, réaliste et raffiné, sceptique et crédule, viril et faible, il est le peuple de Paris, le Peuple même.' The parallel can be continued. From the 'Chanson du Mal-Aimé' to the 'Ballade de Bonne Doctrine pour ceux de Mauvaise Vie' is a mere step backward across the centuries. There is nothing (except the moral attitude, which was a concession to the period) which would have made it impossible for Apollinaire to write:

Car ou soies porteur de bulles  
 Pipeur ou hazardeur de dés  
 Tailleur de faulx coigns, tu te brusles  
 Comme ceux qui sont eschaudez,

Traistres parjurs, de foy vuydez  
 Soies larron, ravis ou pillés:  
 Ou en va l'acquest, que cuidez?  
 Tout aux tavernes et aux filles.

Like Villon, Apollinaire is the poet of Paris—not the Paris of Baudelaire, shrouded in the perverse delight of its mysterious terror, but the Paris of 'la saine réalité'. Apollinaire's reality is a Cubist reality; his Paris is not a city bathed in a single mood, but a changing landscape, banal and mysterious, pitiful, cruel and fantastic. At one moment the streets and houses, the buses and the people, appear objectively, almost as a journalist might see them:

J'ai vu ce matin une jolie rue dont j'ai oublié le nom  
 Neuve et propre du soleil elle était le clairon  
 Les directeurs les ouvriers et les belles sténodactylographes  
 Du lundi matin au samedi soir quatre fois par jour y passent  
 Le matin par trois fois la sirène y gémit  
 Une cloche rageuse y aboie vers midi  
 Les inscriptions des enseignes et des murailles  
 Les plaques les avis à la façon des perroquets criaillent  
 J'aime la grâce de cette rue industrielle. . . .

Then, suddenly, everything is transformed. The particular becomes the general, everything is personalized, the sunlit street, the workmen, the secretaries, the posters and all the rest merge into a single fantastic vision of the century:

Vingtième pupille des siècles il sait y faire  
 Et changé en oiseau ce siècle comme Jésus monte en l'air  
 Les diables dans les abîmes lèvent la tête pour le regarder  
 Ils disent qu'il imite Simon Mage en Judée  
 Ils crient s'il sait voler qu'on l'appelle voleur  
 Les anges voltigent autour du joli voltigeur  
 Icare Enoch Elie Apollonius de Thyane  
 Flottent autour du premier aéroplane

The poet's function has been fulfilled and art has created order out of the everyday sights, or objects, of the street 'entre la rue Aumont-Thiéville et l'avenue des Ternes' so that they no longer appear as isolated phenomena from daily life, but as an integral part of creation.

The truth is that in the Apollinairian world isolated phenomena do not exist. An object, a mood, a vice or a virtue, is simply part

of the whole, squinted at from a specific angle. The unquotable obscenities in the story which gives its title to the collection called *L'Hérésiarque* fall into place so naturally that they are shocking only to the official historians of French literature, who draw as thick a veil as possible over Apollinaire and all his doings. One realizes immediately that Isaac Laquedem, the Wandering Jew, has wandered long enough to absorb into himself all the attributes of humanity, including obscenity. 'Le mysticisme touche de près à l'érotisme,' Apollinaire once said. He had an immediate eye for the obscene detail in life, and obtruded it resolutely into both poetry and prose, with the guileless crudity of one who has discovered that mysticism and erotism exist side by side and interplay, each a real function, equally valid, but neither complete nor understandable when seen alone.

Apollinaire is not really a prose writer. He enjoys himself immensely, inventing enormous, erudite and succulent *blagues*. He is a master of tight construction; each story in *L'Hérésiarque* or the collection which follows the short novel, *Le Poète Assassiné*, is like a round, compact little parcel. Yet he is not a short story writer, and still less a novelist. He is a story teller, always present in his work, so that one listens to him rather than reads him, and misses the gesture and the sound of the voice. Apollinaire's constant intrusion of his own personality creates the special savour of his poetry but often overbalances his prose.

Apollinaire wrote the poems of *Alcools* in the first joy of his youth and the new certainties of Cubism. At the marriage of his friend André Salmon, in 1911, he had cried out his love for words of which the sense must be changed:

Nous nous sommes rencontrés dans un caveau maudit  
Fumant tous deux et mal vêtus attendant l'aube  
Epris épris des mêmes paroles dont il faudrait changer le sens

Like every true poet he was conscious of the occult potentialities of words and felt for them something of the primitive fear and wonder which had surrounded them in the forgotten times when they were magical sounds charged with powers of incantation rather than the trivial coinage of daily conversation. Like the Symbolists, he believed that it was the function of a poet to restore words to their first estate, to cleanse them of the incrustations of centuries and renew their ancient and terrible brilliance. The



Symbolists had started the revolution for the liberation of words, and Apollinaire carried it on. At first he experimented with metre, refused to recognize the cast-iron principle of alternating male and female rhyme; then he went further and made use of purely oral rhymes, using words which rhymed for the ear but not for the eye. The result broke the back of French poetry, probably for ever, robbed it of its classic severity but gave it a new grace and suppleness. With its new rhymes and new images French poetry, re-dressed by Apollinaire, Max Jacob and André Salmon, lost the stately airs of the bourgeoisie and put on something of the manners of those *mauvais garçons* whom they loved to frequent. It was no longer confined to drawing rooms and polite society but could visit where it pleased and make use of the outright language of the people, the banal language of the journalist and the obscene language of the outcast. The frontiers of poetry had been broken down. In this atmosphere of joyful freedom, the lyricism of Apollinaire came to full flower. He had found his perfect medium, a true meeting place for style and nature. In *Alcools* he could feel that he was fulfilling himself completely.

Now one of the things which divided Apollinaire so sharply from the poets of a previous generation, was that he possessed what we should nowadays call a social conscience. He believed in the social function of the artist, in his mission as an educator or revealer. As the years passed, he began to feel that his experiments were not complete in themselves, and that, once the occult power had been restored to the Word, it might be used to create not only a new poetry, but a new world. Poetry was to be the true revolution which would reveal man to himself:

Voici le temps de la magie  
Il s'en revient attendez-vous  
A des milliards de prodiges  
Qui n'ont fait naître aucune fable  
Nul les ayant imaginés

Profondeurs de la conscience  
On vous explorera demain  
Et qui sait quels êtres vivants  
Seront tirés de ces abîmes  
Avec des univers entiers

Between the publication of *Alcools* and *Calligrammes*, Apollinaire the

pure poet had become Apollinaire the poet-prophet. The first was the descendant of Symbolism, the second the ancestor of Surrealism.

In *Calligrammes*, Apollinaire attempted the liberation of the Word, experimenting first with free verse and then with the visual arrangement of words such as Mallarmé had already attempted in 'Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard'. A poem on rain is printed in downward streaming letters, others are set up in the shape of a watch-face or of the upward curling smoke from a pipe, and it must be admitted that they are masterpieces of ingenious typography. The trouble is that they have nothing to do with poetry since absolute liberty is a contradiction in terms and words exercise their own tyranny by their very existence. Croniamental, the hero of the *Poète Assassiné*, carries the theory of poetic liberty to its logical conclusion when, after giving examples of his latest poems in regular and free verse, he says, 'Je n'écrirai plus qu'une poésie libre de toute entrave, serait-ce celle du langage' and produces:

M a h é v i d a n o m i    renanochiipnoditoc

TEL: 33-122

A Z  
aollvloktin

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Croniamental is a self-portrait of the author, and he gets torn to bits by the crowd, egged on by a scientific philistine from Germany. The moral seems to be that that is what happens to poets, but meanwhile Apollinaire was being torn by the struggle between his old and new self, without the intervention of Horace Tograth. The poems of *Calligrammes* swing back and forth between an extreme experimentalism, hermetic and cabalistic, and flashes of pure lyricism in the manner of *Alcools*. The personal battle is translated in terms of the apparatus of contemporary, objective battle:

Au-dessus de Paris un jour  
Combattaient deux grands avions . . .

L'un était tout ma jeunesse  
Et l'autre c'était l'avenir  
Ils se combattaient avec rage  
Ainsi fit contre Lucifer  
L'archange aux ailes radieuses

Apollinaire hurled himself into the Great War with the mystic fervour of a Péguy, tempered by his own special brand of irony. When he returned to Paris, trepanned, his health gone, but his vast good humour intact, he found himself famous. Cubism had come into its own, but at the very moment when the Cubist years were past. The war had destroyed too much, the world was ripe for Dada, for Jacques Vaché and for Tristan Tzara, for the doctrine of the final imbecility of existence. Apollinaire had seen in war the 'multiplication de l'amour', but to the younger generation which had sprung up meanwhile it was the natural expression of the fundamental chaos of nature. The chasm has not yet been bridged. The Dadaists were to deny Apollinaire and the Surrealists to rediscover him and use him as their spring-board, but Cubism and the Cubist attitude to life had little chance of survival between the two wars.

Shortly before Apollinaire died of Spanish influenza in 1918, he wrote:

Je lègue à l'avenir l'histoire de Guillaume Apollinaire  
Qui fut à la guerre et sut être partout  
Dans les villes heureuses de l'arrière  
Dans tout le reste de l'univers  
Dans ceux qui meurent en piétinant dans le barbelé  
Dans les femmes dans les canons les chevaux  
Au zénith au nadir aux 4 points cardinaux  
Et dans l'unique ardeur de cette veillée d'armes  
Et ce serait sans doute bien plus beau  
Si je pouvais supposer que toutes ces choses dans lesquelles  
je suis partout  
Pouvaient m'occuper aussi  
Mais dans ce sens il n'y a rien de fait  
Car si je suis partout à cette heure il n'y a cependant que  
moi qui suis en moi.

These lines can be interpreted in various ways, but I should suggest they mean that Apollinaire felt himself to have been a success as a poet and a failure as a prophet, that he had been able to swallow the universe, to project his personality into it, but not to give it a twist and send it spinning in a new direction, towards a goal where poetry and prophecy should become the natural destiny of all mankind.

ROBIN FEDDEN

# WHERE SHALL JOHN GO?

## VII—EGYPT

MY DEAR JOHN,

It is encouraging to find you assuming in an off-hand way that we shall be allowed, after the war, to drift about the world in non-official capacities. I very much hope we shall. But I am not over optimistic. Total peace may well be as inaccommodating as total war. Let us suppose, however, that you *can* get away. What sort of testimonial ought I to give this country from the traveller's point of view? If your great-uncle were still alive his answer would be unequivocal. In his opinion Egypt was the only place to winter. As you know, he came out here on several occasions before the First World War. The mummy case which he brought back from Thebes was the familiar wonder of our childhood; and you were lucky enough to come into his collection of Eighteenth-Dynasty scarabs, which—if I am not mistaken—you hastily sold. Yes, your great-uncle's answer would have been unequivocal. Egypt was the traveller's paradise in a day when all travellers were wealthy, and time was of no account.

He and his friends had every reason to be enchanted with it in the early nineteen hundreds. For them everything was possible. You have seen their photographs in the family albums: the men in straw hats, smoking cigars, and the delicious women in sun veils with long white gloves (the book that someone holds is probably Murray's guide or Mrs. Humphrey Ward's last novel). Faded prints reveal them on the terrace at Shepherd's, drifting down the Nile on their private *dahabieh*, settling with a flutter of parasols on some fallen colossus. There is even a picture of the faithful *dragoman* who accompanied them year after year, and gave such satisfaction. But indeed everyone gave satisfaction. From the Swiss hotel-managers to the least camel-boy, your great-uncle met with no one whose first object was not to please. Egypt was good at pleasing when it tried. On moonlight nights marquees would spring up in the desert and dancers appear from nowhere. At noon ice-cold champagne with a little pâté and chicken had the habit of materializing in the most unexpected

places, among the palm trees at Memphis, by the sacred lake at Karnak. When you drove out in your victoria, bare-footed runners in Turkish breeches, wielding batons, cleared the way. Sometimes you were even addressed as Your Highness. It was all very pleasant. In addition, if you had any pretensions to being a man of taste, you of course made a collection of antiquities. There are still good things to be found. Genuine mummied crocodiles at Latopolis for half a guinea apiece, nice granite heads of Sekmet or Anubis, and delightful objects on blue glaze. If you were really very grand and wealthy, the same well-oiled machinery which propelled you so comfortably and gracefully up and down the Nile valley, might even arrange for you to *discover* a tomb. But that was undoubtedly more expensive.

Dignified expense was indeed the keynote of the picture. The gold sovereign coloured it all. After the First World War there were no longer any sovereigns and things began to change. Fewer, and mostly different, people came to Egypt. They had less to spend and stayed a shorter time. More and more rarely did the private *dahabiehs* put out for Luxor and beyond, regardless of time and money. The hotels—few, large, and luxurious—were now half empty. The hotel managers and the camel-boys grew less ingratiating as their complaisance grew less profitable. The elaborate system by which your great-uncle was insulated from all contact with the normal dusty, dirty, noisy, toiling life of the country began to show signs of wear. Though still far enough removed from the millions of half-starving peasants, the traveller became conscious of slight frictions, of something that was definitely neither Ancient Egypt nor the Arabian Nights. There was also Egyptian nationalism which, though not always active, was aggravating. Where the Edwardians had passed as superior beings, the modern traveller suspected that some people at any rate regarded him as an interloper. Then came the Second World War, and the system of insulation broke down overnight. The traveller's Egypt disappeared. Luxor and Assuan were deserted. In Cairo and Alexandria, whatever your papers in England may have told you, the hotels became extremely bad, and often bug-ridden. In the housing shortage, nursing sisters rightly enough inherited the *dahabiehs*. The antique dealers closed up shop, or putting their best things away did a roaring trade in cheap brasswork, inlay and knickknacks. At Mena the interior

of the Great Pyramid, bepossed by the admiring troops of the Allied Nations, became a vast latrine.

But the Nile and the temples still remain. There is thus every reason why the hotels should pull themselves together after the war, and the seasonal migration to Egypt begin once again. The day of the leisurely progress up the river and the private *dahabieh* has probably gone for good. The migration will be different in character, still intensely interesting, but more hurried and less gracious. Expensive it will remain, even if you travel with the reverse of Edwardian prodigality. In this country where there is no middle class the traveller cannot fit into a ready-made groove. There is no lodging for him between the pasha's palace and the peasant's hovel. As he may not get asked to the first, and would not at all like the second, the life he leads in Egypt has to be specially manufactured for him. It is a luxury product. Further it is a luxury available only at special points linked by the Wagons-Lits. You will find it in comfortable hotels at Cairo, Mena, Luxor, Assuan, and Wadi Halfa. No alternative exists. Whether you like it or not you must enter, in the more modest form that it will assume in post-war days, that insulated circuit in which your great-uncle moved without misgiving. To drift round the country in personal haphazard fashion is unfortunately quite out of the question. How should you find cuisine in villages where they will not have had a square meal in days, or clean linen where the *fellahin* lie down in their rags?

You must also reconcile yourself, in the big towns, at any rate, to not being very popular. I do not mean that there are likely to be incidents or even concrete unpleasantness—unless you create them—but a person far less sensitive than yourself could not fail to notice among sections of the population something bordering on hostility. This, I must emphasize, has nothing to do with your being English. On the whole the English get on with the Egyptians as well, or even better, than most foreigners. The attitude is part of something wider. A general suspicion of the West is current throughout the Middle East (it is perhaps less strong in Egypt than elsewhere), a suspicion which primarily expresses itself in the strong reaction of Islam against our influence and ideology. On the highest level the reaction is very rightly preoccupied with the disastrous impact of our civilization on local culture and tradition, and sets out to save and preserve, at a

late hour, all that is best in them. On the lowest level it takes the form of a naïve xenophobia.

So much for the drawbacks of a trip to Egypt. Luckily there remain, independent of time, the permanent attractions which have brought a stream of travellers here ever since Herodotus. The things which charmed Sandys—the Jacobean traveller whom Dryden thought the ‘best versifier’ of his age—will still charm you. Surveying Egypt and the Nile from the top of the Great Pyramid, you may well exclaim, as he did, ‘O sovereigne of streames and most excellent of countries’.

First there is the amazing winter climate. Having probably been let in for the paralysing cold and rain of a winter in the south of France, you will be sceptical when I talk of an endless succession of blue skies, with a cool north breeze, from November to mid-March. But it is true. Rain is an event north of Cairo, a miracle at Assuan. What is more, the climate is not merely sunny, but, particularly in Upper Egypt, very stimulating. The deserts on either side of the Nile Valley make the air dry and almost sparkling. There, if anywhere, you might say with excuse—were you given to the use of such phraseology—‘The air, my dear, is like champagne’.

You will appreciate the landscape too. Quite unlike those overcoloured postcards of sunset palms and pyramids, it is undeclamatory and unsentimental. As the utilitarian antithesis of all that is wild and romantic in nature, it might even be boring if it were not infinitely subtle. Its subtlety ‘makes’ it: I know of no landscape where there is so rarely something out of tone, where the colouring is laid on with more exactitude, and where the effects are less obvious. The Nile with its attendant strip of green cultivation curls mile after mile between the deserts. Cotton, clover, sugar-cane brakes, canals, and date-palm groves, follow each other in orderly procession down the valley. One unassuming mud-brick village succeeds another. The best way I can describe it is by saying that you will probably be reminded of the Fen Country. There is often the same expanse of sky, the same canal, the same clump of trees composed gracefully in the middle distance (but palms not elms). On the other hand you miss the magnificent pile of clouds that towers over your East Anglian horizon, and altogether receive the impression of a landscape far less weighted, more varied, and more delicate.

With the form of East Anglian country, Egypt has the light and tone of Provence.

It is in this essentially crop-bearing landscape, a landscape threaded always with labouring figures and beasts of burden, that you find the other Egypt of the empty temples. You pass at once from agriculture to Pharaonic pomp. The contrast is emphasized by the fact that the labouring *fellah* is sensible of no connection between himself and the vast anomalous buildings that stand in the sun. Like the rocks on the desert edge, they are permanent but unproductive elements in his landscape and he does not give them a thought. For you, on the other hand, they will be one of the main reasons for visiting Egypt, perhaps even your real *but de promenade*. I wonder what you will think of them. The usual danger is that in Egypt, where it is particularly important to keep them separate, people muddle up æsthetics and history. From an historical point of view, Egyptian art and architecture have a unique interest. The walls of tombs and temples are as precisely informative as books, recording in detail the activities of the first considerable human society from its birth to its decay. Egyptian art, like no other, presents you with a comprehensive summary of human life over a remote period of long duration. The climate conspires with the little figures on the walls to make this betrayal of the past almost complete. Egypt is made for ruins. No ivy prizes apart the stones, no rains deface the writings. The house that falls, the sand buries and preserves. Uncovered by the archæologist's spade, the frieze is intact and the hieroglyphs jerk out their message with scrupulous care. The wealth of material is fully adequate to the six thousand years it covers. Up the Nile valley the tombs and temples stretch to the borders of the Sudan; the sand, like a lucky dip at the fair, yields inexhaustible supplies of papyri, mummies, jewels, and pottery. At the step-pyramid at Sakkara you stand before the earliest monumental building in the world; at Tell-el-Amarna you meet 'the first individualist in history', the extraordinary Pharaoh Akhenaton; at Thebes you decipher the accounts of the most ancient of all military empires. From Menes, first king of the First Dynasty, to the Græco-Roman tourists who wrote their names on the Colossus of Memnon, history files past you, fully documented, dramatically explicit. The stimulus of all this, I need hardly say, is tremendous. As you pick off layer



after layer of time and your perspective widens, endless trains of thought get started. You find Europe and your classic-Christian background getting involved in, and related to, the Pharaonic story in a way that you would never have thought possible.

But history is not art. The æsthetic importance of many of these great temples and tombs seems to me very questionable. Time and again proportion and design are sacrificed to mere size; you feel that often these buildings were made to impress rather than to please. The great hypostyle hall at Karnak is, for instance, architecturally a hopeless affair: the vast swollen pillars are flabby and spineless, and set so close to each other that they destroy any effect of size. They don't even *look* large. Again, the symbolism which runs riot across every wall ceased at a very early date to be a true imaginative shorthand, and became a chaos of abstraction. Much of the statuary, it is also well to remember, was not made to be looked at but to be sealed up in tombs; its object was not to please the living but to secure specific material advantages for the dead. Sensibility in Egyptian sculpture is the exception rather than the reverse. The real trouble with Egyptian art, from temples to intaglios, was, I suppose, its lack of development. Under royal and priestly control it became ritualized and stereotyped at the expense of all vitality. So intense did its traditionalism become that, in the seventh century B.C., it carefully retraced the few steps that it had taken since the Old Kingdom. Only the expert can distinguish many of the works of the Twenty-sixth Dynasty from those of the Fourth Dynasty produced two thousand years earlier.

I must not give you the impression, however, that you won't see numbers of very lovely things in Egypt. The alabaster and diorite jars of the pre-dynastic period, the amazing wall carvings at Sakkara, the peristyle of Luxor Temple, and almost everything of the brief Akhenaton period, make an unforgettable impression. Even the Egyptian love of mass can achieve the sublime. Looking at the Great Pyramid you will recall Gaudier-Brzeska's remark: 'Sculpture is the mountain'. You may also remember Dr. Johnson at his best: 'I consider this mighty structure as a monument to the insufficiency of human enjoyments. A king whose power is unlimited, and whose treasures surmount all real and imaginary wants, is compelled to solace, by the erection of a Pyramid, the satiety of dominion and tastelessness of pleasures,

and to amuse the tediousness of declining life, by seeing thousands labouring without end, and one stone, for no purpose, laid upon another.' The English have always reacted well to the Pyramids, and one could almost produce an anthology of their Pyramid Literature.

Finally there is always Egyptian craftsmanship, the one thing that never failed century after century. The Egyptians are the outstanding artisans of history. You will, for instance, appreciate their eye for detail and their unerring sense for the possibilities of a wide range of materials. It is this craftsmanship which is the most striking thing about the Tutankhamen 'finds' which, between ourselves, are otherwise chiefly remarkable for a certain Vogue-like chic. Egyptian craftsmanship alone kept Egyptian art going and it accounts for the fact that, in spite of rigid crystallization, art maintained a certain standard of excellence. Even when repetitive it is rarely downright bad.

It is, I may say, far easier to be critical about the æsthetics of Egyptian art when writing to you than when wandering through the temples of Upper Egypt. Their atmosphere, and their setting, are altogether disarming. Palms wave alongside the temple walls and green bee-eaters perch on their swaying fronds. The river with its tall-sailed feluccas, and the sound of voices across the water are a permanent part of the *décor*. Time saturates the empty courts over which the doves go circling in the sun. The years are counted in thousands. Some of these temples fell derelict before history in Europe had properly begun. The very deities for whom they were built are no longer worshipped anywhere; in Egypt the gods have died sooner than the works of man. It is difficult not to be overwhelmed by such long perspectives.

On your way to Upper Egypt you will inevitably spend some time in Alexandria and Cairo. Alexandria is no more Egypt than it was in Callimachus's day. It is a Græco-Levantine city built on cotton. The people you will meet there when they are not watching the cotton market, are watching the races or lying in the sun on the beach. They are very hospitable and have a great deal of time and money, both of which they find it difficult to spend. The women, who are at their most effective when poured into black satin, have few ideas and a great many diamonds. You must dine at the *Union Bar*—certainly the best food in the Middle East—and without fail go to see the exquisite terra-cotta figures at the Museum, the finest things of the Greek

period in Egypt. (Presumably owing to the climate, they have kept their delicate colours, and they make a very different impression from some of the rather dirty brown Tanagra figures one has seen elsewhere.) Otherwise you need perhaps only look at the sea. It is Alexandria's most effective link with the past. It must have been the same extraordinary creamy blue when Menelaus, returning from Troy, outwitted Proteus on what was later to be the Island of Pharos, or when Pompey, rowing towards the beach with his murderers, bowed his head deeper over the dialogues of Plato. Cleopatra's palace is still visible on calm days beneath the water, and the fishing boats put in where her silver-oared barge went hissing across the harbour to visit Anthony in the retreat which he had made for himself beside the Pharos.

Cairo, my dear John, needs more than a letter to itself. It, and not Baghdad, was, you may be surprised to learn, the city of the Arabian Nights. Of that splendour a great deal remains. I should hazard a guess that there are more important monuments in Cairo dating from before the sixteenth century than in any town elsewhere. Certainly it is only in Cairo that you can form a just idea of the achievement of Islamic art. The mosques of Ibn Tulun and Sultan Hassan will come as a revelation. They undoubtedly rank with the first buildings of the world: but, though outstanding, they are only two among literally scores of sights which deserve a double asterisk in any guide book. The mausoleum of the Sultan Barkuk, the elegance of Kait Bey's domes and minarets, the atmosphere of the so-called 'Blue Mosque', are among the things which I know would particularly delight you. With your taste for rococo you also must not miss the enchanting Turkish frivolities of the early nineteenth century, the apotheosis of stucco nonsense. Incidentally, the old quarters of the town, quite apart from their buildings, are fascinating and the life there has not changed since Lane described it in his *Modern Egyptians* (the best of the books about Cairo) over a hundred years ago. The crowded bazaars, the spice market, the sherbet sellers in red-striped skirts, the prosperous merchants in their silk *kufans*, the public scribes, the holy men, and the vile beggars, are all there as they have been for centuries. Reality you will find lays on the local colour, the glamour of the East, just as lavishly as imagination or the novelists.

Juxtaposed to the dusty, highly coloured past lies new Cairo, the ferro-concrete present. This proximity of irreconcilables lends Cairo a strangeness and a surrealist quality that are very noticeable. In the traffic-jam the camel waits with the limousine, in the air-conditioned cinema the turbaned sheik listens to the incantations of Bing Crosby, at home your Berberine cook prostrates himself towards Mecca and follows the prescriptions of Mrs. Beeton. At times the unreality of the city assumes heroic proportions. There is a legless beggar who propels himself upon a tray attached to a roller skate; with one hand he blows a motor horn and between his teeth holds an ambassador's visiting card. Not a stone's throw from a Protestant church you may even see, as I did, an old hermaphrodite capering to a flute, by moonlight, under a weeping willow.

Though new Cairo, beside the old, has something of a half-finished air, and the uncertainty of a *parvenu*, it will go out of its way to be agreeable to the passing stranger. There is an excellent Sporting Club where, if you want to, you can play anything from polo to croquet; there is a white-and-gold opera house where the Empress Eugenie saw the first performance of *Aida*; there are, or were before the war, Shepherd's grill and at least one very agreeable cabaret. There are moonlight picnics on the Nile and excursions into the desert oases. Hashish, if you insist on doing the East thoroughly, though expensive is not unobtainable; and it is perhaps not irrelevant to add that a whisky and soda before the war cost you sixpence, and presumably may do so again.

I am only too aware that the little I have said makes an inadequate picture of a very complicated place. It is also, mind you, a picture designed for a prospective tourist, though you would never acknowledge such a name. There are many more serious things I might have talked about: the problem of the assimilation of the West, the right way of educating these people, the fight against bilharzia and hookworm from which the large majority of them suffer, and not least the political set-up. Egypt you will find is full of such problems, problems of which your great-uncle never dreamt. After the stagnation of centuries the figures in the fields are again stirring. It is no longer a country with only a past. The future is there, whether one views it with optimism or misgiving.

DOUGLAS COOPER

# GEORGE MOORE AND MODERN ART

IN a recent book on Seurat I was struck by what seemed an odd phrase: 'Even a connoisseur as informed as George Moore . . .' I stopped reading and began to wonder whether, perhaps, I had after all been mistaken. Then I decided to examine anew the whole story of George Moore's life in Paris and his relations with the Impressionists. The story is hard to follow, because, as George Moore was never given to accuracy and, in the words of Mr. Charles Morgan, 'had an abiding desire to re-write his former life', with each re-writing of his story he produced new fusions and confusions and much unravelling now has to be done. Moreover, there is not much help to be got from French sources, for, as an obscure young Englishman, he counted so little with his French friends that neither his sayings nor his doings were recorded. There is no reference to him in the correspondence of either Manet, Cézanne or Degas, only three brief mentions in the letters of Pissarro, and even Moore did not consider it worth while to send a prospective biographer to see Monet. Indeed in 1922 the only person who could be found to give a first-hand account of Moore's early life in Paris was the critic, Théodore Duret.

Directly he had attained the age of twenty-one George Moore set out 'for Paris and Art'. This was in March 1873. His father was dead, he had a moderate private income and what he thought were artistic leanings. It was his 'plan to study painting in Cabanel's studio'; but his chosen master was too occupied and persuaded him to attend classes at the Ecole des Beaux Arts, which for a time he did. Tiring of this, however, he called on Jules Lefebvre, another artist whom he 'accepted unconditionally', who in his turn also turned him away, but recommended the studio of a M. Julien in Montmartre 'where he gave instruction every Tuesday morning'. Moore then joined this studio, but did not remain very long, for in the spring of 1874 he suddenly returned to London and Ireland where he spent the remainder of the year.

According to Colonel Moore, his brother, George's conversation at this time was chiefly of musical comedy, not of painting, though he did express an unbounded love for the pre-Raphaelites. He had almost certainly not even heard then of the Impressionists who, during his absence from Paris, held their first collective exhibition in May 1874. But (though he omits the date) it is clear from *Confessions of a Young Man* what was already the attitude towards them of his circle of friends when he returned to Paris. And he quickly acquiesced in their sentiments. For he recounts with relish the excitement that prevailed in the studio of his fellow art-student Lewis Marshall on the opening day of an exhibition of Impressionist pictures whither they hurried to inspect the monstrosities, muttering: 'I hear that Bedlam is nothing to it'. Chronologically there is no doubt that he is describing events of 1875 but it is typical of Moore that, whereas he has failed to disguise his actual state of mind, the factual detail is confused and (one suspects) deliberately inaccurate. Indeed about his feelings he is most explicit: 'We went to jeer a group of enthusiasts that willingly forfeit all delights of the world in the hope of realizing a new æstheticism'. Yet none of the pictures which are said to have provoked this mirth had in fact then been painted. Three of them were first exhibited in 1877, but he could not have seen any of the others—including *La Grande Jatte*, of which he gives a nameless and ribald description—before the Impressionist Exhibition of 1886: in other words, only twelve months before the date at which he was writing. Are we then to understand that he could not distinguish between one Impressionist painting and another and was only consistent in his rejection of them all?

As there was no Impressionist Exhibition in 1875, Moore must have been thinking of some other exhibition, and Mr. Hone is no doubt correct in stating that he was one of the many who 'rushed to mock at the Impressionists when, in 1875, seventy drawings shown at the Hotel Drouot by Claude Monet, Sisley, Renoir and Berthe Morisot realized 10,000 francs.' By this time he had resumed work at Julien's and 'the semi-classic, objective school, with its great subject canvases, the fine draughtsmanship of Cabanel, Lefebvre and Bouguereau had all his admiration'. During the summer of this same year the Moore family visited George in Paris, and Colonel Moore has stated that his brother

was still painting and 'that he talked mostly about Corot and Balzac'. As Corot had died in February, it is perhaps permissible to trace a connection. In September or October 1875, Moore rented an apartment close to Julien's studio in the Passage des Panoramas, where he and his friend Marshall both worked at their painting. But, for some reason or other, he came to the conclusion that he was losing the duel 'for supremacy in an art for which . . . [he] possessed few qualifications, certainly no facilities', and in the summer of 1876 he 'laid down [his] charcoal and said "I will never draw or paint again"'.

'Surrender', we are told, 'brought relief', but for a time Moore was then without a calling. He 'read Shelley and wandered about the streets', then 'to divert his thoughts sought out a society where Julien and his pupils were unknown.' He found both refuge and distraction among cosmopolitan Anglo-French society. Nowhere does he refer to the Second Impressionist Exhibition of April 1876, which would have been ignored by his newly found grand friends; and when Marshall threatened to rival him socially as well as artistically, Moore packed his portmanteau and spent the summer philandering in Boulogne with a grand-daughter of Lucien Bonaparte.

After his return to Paris in September 1876 Moore had a reconciliation with Marshall and they established themselves—they 'hoped for the rest of their lives'—in a new apartment in the rue de la Tour des Dames in Montmartre. Marshall was to paint and Moore to write. And from this moment Moore devoted himself entirely to literature. He read avidly—Hugo, Musset, Shelley, Gautier and Leconte de Lisle. But it appears to have been *Les Fleurs du Mal* which 'hurried the course of [his] disease' and inspired his own first efforts at writing. He passes over in silence both the Third Impressionist Exhibition, which was held in May 1877, and a second equally sensational sale of Impressionist pictures at the Hotel Drouot on May 28th of that year. Yet he must have visited the Exhibition. For the passage (already partially quoted) from the *Confessions* relating to 1875 contains obvious references to certain pictures which were hung at the Impressionist Exhibition of 1877 and which in *Modern Painting* he again wrongly attributes to '1875 or 1876.' Thus: 'Then we stood and screamed at Monet . . . We stood before the "Turkeys" and fell to wondering seriously if it were

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serious work . . . "Just look at the house! why, the turkeys couldn't walk in at the door. The perspective is all wrong. . . ." and when we came to those piercingly personal visions of railway stations by the same painter . . . our laughter knew no bounds. . . . Nor had we any more understanding for Renoir's rich sensualities of tone. . . . There was a half-length nude figure of a girl . . . but we saw nothing except that the eyes were out of drawing.' Moore, however, was writing after he had met many of the painters whom earlier he had mocked, and so he adds piously: 'We indulged in boisterous laughter, exaggerated in the hope of giving as much pain as possible, and deep down in our souls we knew that we were lying—at least I did'. Then, as though to lend colour to his conversion, he refers to 'Degas' genius', to Renoir's 'mastery', to Guillaumin's '*chef d'œuvre*' and to Monet as 'that most exquisite painter of blond light'. But it remains obvious what were still his real feelings about the latest French painting at the time of his return to London in the summer of 1877. This time he was only absent a few weeks: time enough to find a publisher for his first collection of verse.

I have not yet introduced the man who was chiefly responsible for presenting Moore to the literary and artistic world of Paris. His name was Bernard Lopez, and when Moore knew him he had already 'written eighty or ninety plays', some of them in collaboration with Dumas, de Nerval, Gautier, Scribe and Banville. There is as much doubt about when as about where Moore first met Lopez. In the *Confessions* he states that they 'used to meet at breakfast in a neighbouring café', whereas in *Avowals*, written thirty years later, he says that Lopez 'came every Monday to dinner' at the Hôtel de Russie, where Moore lived in 1875, and that they were introduced by the patron. However, the place is less important than the date of their meeting. Lopez, it appears, inspired him to write two plays (later destroyed) and offered valuable criticism; 'it was in his company' that Moore purchased his first copy of *Les Fleurs du Mal* 'and out of these poems and others he advised [him] to read arose, within a year, a small volume entitled *Flowers of Passion*'. It would seem therefore that the two men met in 1876, for, when Moore again returned to London in the summer of 1877, this time in search of a publisher, he took with him this first collection of his own verse. According to Mme Duclaux (then Mary Robinson), it was



during this visit that he was brought to her parents' house by the Irish poet O'Shaughnessy and, though she is in error in suggesting the date as 1876, she gives an amusing account of the occasion. Albeit, despite the fact that her sister 'was studying painting at the Slade School' under Legros, there is no hint that Moore ever spoke of the latest French painting, and Mme Duclaux concludes that 'he looked out of place in our learned little circle of artists and scholars'.

Moore does not seem to have remained many weeks in London in 1877, and was probably back in Paris by October. His trip, however, had been successful and *Flowers of Passion* was published in London at the beginning of 1878.

According to *Avowals*, it was as a result of being shown some violent attacks on Moore's verse in the English Press that Lopez suggested that they might 'write a play together'—a play about Luther. For the next few months they worked hard at their collaboration, meeting almost daily. Then one evening, after a late session, they went for refreshment to a café on the Place Pigalle, called *Le Rat Mort*, of which they 'had hardly crossed the threshold when Lopez ran forward' to greet a man sitting there writing. This man was none other than Villiers de l'Île Adam.

'You must know Mallarmé,' said Villiers later the same evening. 'He receives on Tuesday evening in the rue de Rome.'

'But who is Mallarmé?' said Moore, and for reply Villiers thereupon wrote him a letter of introduction to the great poet.

The following Tuesday evening Moore, all agog, called on Mallarmé, carrying a copy of his own 'volume of verses . . . *Flowers of Passion*'. That would therefore seem to put their meeting in the first half of 1878. But against this interpretation one has to consider Mr. Hone's statement that Moore had been given an introduction to O'Shaughnessy by Mallarmé in 1877. There is no apparent evidence to support it either in Moore's writings or in Mme Duclaux' article, and in view of Moore's exceptionally clear description of their first meeting it seems most improbable. Besides, as Mr. Hone has confused S. T. Robinson, Mme Duclaux' father, with Lionel Robinson, then editor of the *Art Monthly Review*, for which Mallarmé was French correspondent, it is probable that he is doubly in error and has drawn false conclusions.

After their meeting Moore, apparently, went quite regularly to Mallarmé's on Tuesdays, though he was once again absent from

Paris—this time for much longer—throughout the autumn and winter of 1878. However he was back in Paris at the beginning of 1879 and—in the intervals of a gay social life—resumed his weekly visit. Then one day, struck by the regularity of his attendance, the poet decided that Moore had ‘earned a copy of *L’Après-midi d’un Faune*’, and suddenly presented him with the fine edition on Japanese paper, illustrated by Manet. Moore has called this moment ‘the great turning-point’ in his Paris life, for, during a subsequent discussion on the poem, he claims to have remarked ‘that Manet’s drawings were the only modern drawings that had any character of their own’. Whether this was said deliberately to please Mallarmé, or with the sincerity of a young man whose artistic opinions were evolving one cannot be sure; at all events Mallarmé, we are told, repeated the remark to Manet and, according to *Avowals*, commended the young poet ‘with the golden hair and pink and white complexion’ as a peculiarly suitable model. ‘You can see Manet any night you like at the Nouvelle Athènes’ he informed Moore. ‘I have spoken about you to him.’

Mystery again surrounds this meeting. But all Moore’s accounts agree that as he was sitting one night in the Nouvelle Athènes correcting (or pretending to correct) proofs, ‘the glass door of the café grated upon the sanded floor’ and Manet entered and sat down with Degas. All Moore’s accounts agree too that Manet was the first to speak, saying: ‘Does not our conversation interrupt you in the correction of your proofs?’ But whereas in *Avowals* it is made clear that Manet was acting at Mallarmé’s instigation, this is disguised elsewhere. In *Reminiscences of the Impressionist Painters* and *Vale* he declares: ‘One evening I discovered the ideal café on the Place Pigalle. I cannot say now if it were instinct that guided me there, or if, perchance, I met someone who told me that Manet spent his evenings in the café of the Nouvelle Athènes.’ He then goes on to suggest that he had sat there ‘evening after evening’ longing to be received into the circle of the man whom he had ‘begun to recognize as the great new force in painting’. In *Modern Painting*, on the other hand, he says that Manet had been pointed out to him in the Nouvelle Athènes, and that on several occasions shyness had compelled him ‘to abandon his determination to speak to him [Manet]’. In *Avowals*, however, he explains that he was not ‘aware that the café of the Nouvelle Athènes was the moot-house of two great literary and artistic movements’.

Their first conversation appears to have been limited, possibly by Degas' impatience, but before parting Manet told Moore to come next day to his studio at 73 rue d'Amsterdam. Thus began the acquaintance out of which Moore was to make capital for the rest of his life. Yet, as one reads the extravagant phrases in which its intimacy is suggested one must always remember that, on the evidence, a period of scarcely one year is involved. For, at the beginning of 1880, Moore was suddenly recalled to Ireland on family business 'and feeling that his life was over and done with in Paris, [he] determined that the rupture should be complete, and vowed, as the steamer left [the French] cliffs that [he] would return no more, but keep the past as a relic.' He returned nevertheless for a short visit in 1882, but nowhere mentions revisiting his erstwhile 'great friend' Manet—already a very sick man and living outside Paris—who died in March 1883. Moore was next in Paris in 1884.

Far be it from me to suggest that the year 1879–80 was not a very full year for Moore. It undoubtedly was. But it was of far greater importance to himself than to his French friends, and if he had not afterwards written his French memoirs we would have no record of his sojourn. What reason had they to treat seriously this obscure young Irish poet who contributed nothing, either spiritual, literary or financial to the great artistic renaissance which was then at its height? He was frequently to be seen at the Nouvelle Athènes. He knew Degas, Monet, Renoir, Berthe Morisot, Pissarro, Hugo, Paul Alexis, Daudet, Hérédia and innumerable figures of less importance. He had a glimpse of Zola and made friends with Duret and Jacques-Emile Blanche. He parted company with Marshall, who embarrassed him by praising Bouguereau and Lefebvre in Degas' presence; his play *Luther* was published in London. He spent much time frequenting 'the frenchest of french society . . . where an Englishman never is heard of' and names like de la Tremoille (the first ducal family in France) and d'Osmond began to appear in his correspondence. In other words he floated, and enjoyed himself. He certainly used to visit Manet in his studio: we know this from witnesses. But whether he was attracted there (as he was for example to the studio of Octave Barrès, in whose talent he also believed) more by the company of 'the choicest women of Paris' or by a real love of the master's art is an open question.

One can well imagine that Manet for his part was rather

diverted by this weird, garrulous and 'magnificent young Montmartrian with a blond beard *à la Capoul*,' who was also *mondain* and could no doubt be very charming. '*George Moore lui plaisait par son exotisme bohème et la langueur pâle de sa tête au poil roux*,' writes Moreau-Nélaton; and examining Manet's three portraits of Moore (significantly, all of 1879) one gets a good impression of his personality. An outline oil-sketch shows him seated at a café table in pensive mood, wearing a bowler hat and looking the perfect literary bohemian; a more impromptu and lively painting of him in a garden rises to its crescendo not in the depiction of his face or character but in a virtuoso rendering of his famous hair; a pastel—nicknamed by friends '*Le Noyé Repêché*'—depicts Moore the cultured dandy looking rather frightened and lost. To complete the image one must add the remarkable description by Duret, Manet's biographer and a constant attendant at his studio, who is reported as saying in 1922: 'I remember him [Moore] as a golden-haired fop, an æsthete before the days of Wilde. . . . None of us thought anything of him as a writer, but he was very welcome wherever he went, for his manners were amusing and his French very funny. He tried to shock and astonish people; but he was always the gentleman, and would never associate with those whom he thought to be below his rank as an Irish landlord.' (Socially, of course, Manet was extremely respectable.) As for Moore's estimate of himself, he did once, in a truthful moment, admit that 'it was [his] luck for several years to be taken in hand by men of genius and literally pulled along'. But, at the same time, he dared 'not allow his memory to recall the crude opinions he used to pick up and express in those years'.

Did Moore understand or feel anything about the painting of the men in whose society he suddenly found himself? Surely had he done so he would have made some effort to possess their pictures. For, in his own words, 'by our desire of possession we may measure our admiration'. Yet he never owned any of his portraits by Manet—one gathers in fact from a letter written to his brother in 1912 that he was distinctly embarrassed by the pastel, which he thought made him look a figure of fun, and completely failed to appreciate its great pictorial qualities; nor does he appear to have coveted any of the drawings by Degas. Indeed the only Impressionist painting which was in his possession in 1880 was a not very remarkable pastel portrait of one of his mistresses, the

Comtesse Albazzi (Jamot—Wildenstein Catalogue No. 441). This portrait was given to him by Manet for sentimental reasons, yet when he left Paris he left it behind and the Countess had to attend the sale at his former apartment to buy in her own picture. Some years later she too sold it (to a picture dealer) and it was then that Moore ('for sentimental reasons' as he says) bought it back to give to another friend. Likewise both the '*Portrait de Mme Manet*' and '*Le Clarion*' (Manet's last and unfinished painting) were purchased long after Manet's death, the former indeed not until 1896. I am not convinced that this lack of acquisitiveness can be explained entirely in economic terms for, though in these early years he was not rich, Moore was always quite well off—an income of at least £500 a year—and Impressionist paintings could be bought, so he says, for £20 or £30 each. Had he really been an enthusiastic admirer he would at least have clung to what he had; moreover he would have shown a more ardent interest in his friends' activities, and his writings about them would have been informed by a greater spirit of accuracy. One notices, for example, that he makes no reference to the remarkable Fourth Impressionist Exhibition which was held during the crucial year of 1879. Yet he records how, at the Salon of that year, he admired Bastien-Lepage's 'Potato Harvest' until Degas described the artist as 'a Bouguereau of the modern movement. Then everyone understood that Bastien-Lepage's talent was not an original but a derivative talent.' It would seem alas that, despite the reality of his contacts with the Impressionists, his natural cheap taste remained unaffected and his understanding limited.

And what has he to tell us of Manet himself, his 'great friend' with whom he is supposed to have spent 'so many long days together'? Hardly a single biographical fact is correct. In *Modern Painting* he informs us that Manet 'went to Spain after a few months spent in Couture's studio' and that 'soon after his return from Spain he was awarded a *mention honorable* at the Salon for his portrait of a toreador'; that "'*Le Bon Bock*" was painted early in the '60's . . . when the effects of his Spanish travel were wearing off, and Paris was beginning to command his art'; that 'he had not been to Holland when he painted his Spanish pictures'; that "'*Le Musicien Ambulant*" is a Spanish Manet' and was painted 'after he had seen Goya'; that 'through her sister's marriage Mme Morisot came in contact with Manet'; that 'during the years he [Moore]

knew Manet he never sold a picture'; and that 'only one man believed in him, the great picture-dealer Durand-Ruel, who bought £2,000 worth of pictures of Manet's, and that was the beginning and end of Manet's luck.' The facts of Manet's life and career were well known to his friends even at the time Moore was writing this rubbish, but it is perhaps worth while recalling a few. Manet worked in Couture's studio from 1850-56; he visited Holland in 1856, but did not go to Spain till 1865; he received a *mention honorable* at the Salon of 1861 for '*Le Chanteur Espagnol*', whereas '*Le Musicien Ambulant*' was not painted till 1862 and '*Le Bon Bock*' not till 1873; Manet knew Berthe Morisot and her sister in about 1865; Berthe worked in his studio in the early '70's, and in 1874 married his brother Eugène. And as for champions of Manet's painting one is tempted to wonder whether Moore had never read Baudelaire, Duret, Antonin Proust, Champfleury or Zola; while as for collectors (granted the truth of the statement about Durand-Ruel, who was certainly Manet's first big patron) there can be no excuse but ignorance for omitting the names of Faure the actor, Albert Hecht, Alexis Rouart, Bernstein the banker, Mme Martinet, Perthuiset and Deudon of Nice. I do not seek to deny 'the cloud of injustice which poisoned Manet's life', though credit should be given where it is due, but one hardly expects such inaccuracy in an informed connoisseur and friend. Only brilliant criticism could have offset it, but Moore's views on Manet can be summarized in his one phrase: 'People talk of Manet's originality; that is just what I can't see. What he has got and what you can't take away from him is a magnificent execution.' True enough, but not very original even at the time it was written.

Let us look a little further. In *Modern Painting*, he quite confidently describes an exhibition which he claims to have seen 'in '81 or '82' (when he was no longer resident in Paris!), but which is in fact a description of the Eighth Impressionist Exhibition held in Paris in May 1886. This was the famous occasion on which a large group of '*pointilliste*' paintings were shown, and George Moore recalls 'at least ten pictures of yachts in full sail . . . all painted in a series of little dots' which horrified and confused him. 'Great as was my wonderment,' he wrote, 'it was tenfold increased on discovering that only five of these pictures were painted by the new man, Seurat, whose name was unknown to

me; the other five were painted by my old friend Pissarro'. It seems odd that Moore should admit not having heard of Seurat, after the excitement caused by '*La Baignade*' at the Salon des Indépendants in 1884; but what is even stranger is the nature of his immediate reaction. For, his first thoughts were that either the printer had made an error or the hanging committee were playing a practical joke. However, after examining the signatures he was satisfied that no error had been made, and then after some thought decided that because of 'a long and intimate acquaintance with Pissarro and his work' he could 'recognize the well-known touch even through this most wild and most wonderful transformation.' We are asked to believe indeed that Moore the connoisseur was one of the few for whom this feat was possible: 'to the ordinary visitor their pictures were identical'. Now there are two points worthy of comment here: first, according to Mr. Hone's biography, Moore's only visit to Paris in 1886 was for a fortnight in January (he is perhaps correct as to the length of his stay but in error as to the month), therefore one is entitled to question whether he ever saw the exhibition; second, there is no evidence of his long and intimate acquaintance with Pissarro, who is only casually mentioned in the *Confessions*. Curiously enough, the first of three references to Moore in Pissarro's letters to his son records, rather drily and as a matter of small consequence, that 'Moore the English novelist' was brought by Duret to a dinner given by the Impressionists in March 1886.

However, what is perhaps more significant is that this account proves that if Moore ever had enjoyed any pictorial receptivity, it had already withered by the age of 34. For, to quote again from the *Confessions*, it would have been to this exhibition that he went like many another bourgeois, 'insolent with patent leather shoes and bright kid gloves and armed with all the jargon of the school, "*Cette jambe ne porte pas*"; "*la nature ne se fait pas comme ça*" etc.' to mock at '*La Grande Jatte*'. And in *Modern Painting* too he has left us in no doubt about his feelings: 'To say that these scientifically painted pictures are strange, absurd, ridiculous, conveys no sensation of their extravagances; and I think that even an elaborate description would miss its mark. For in truth the pictures merit no such attention.' Naturally the first '*pointilliste*' paintings presented some difficulties to the untrained eye and were not received with universal acclaim; but whereas the few informed connoisseurs



made the effort of good will to understand and champion their friends' pictures, Moore proudly allied himself with the philistines.

Both Dr. Emmons and Mr. Hone agree that it was in 1885-86 that Moore first met Sickert, possibly through his friend Blanche, and it was through Sickert that he came in contact with a number of other English painters including Steer, Whistler and later Tonks. It is my firm belief, that, in a sense, this contact was the real turning-point in Moore's artistic life. Hitherto he had fluttered around a group of painters and a new movement in painting without really understanding or appreciating their importance. They had been as much figures of fun to him as he was to them. Suddenly he found himself involved with a group of English artists—centred around the newly formed New English Art Club and the Slade School—some of whom knew many of his former friends and all of whom worshipped them to the extent of modelling their own art on French models. One can imagine how much their conversation turned around the latest developments in French painting and how embarrassed Moore with his conventional (not to say reactionary) and negative taste must have felt. He had lived in Paris for seven years, which they had not done, and had known men whom he now found were among the most original painters of his day; but instead of being himself more interesting in England on that account he was in danger of being ignored because he had failed to take them seriously. So he hastened to try to repair the omission by writing his memoirs, which were published in 1888 as *Confessions of a Young Man*. At any price he had to become interesting, and at the expense of historical accuracy this volume was cleverly contrived to *épater le bourgeois*. It is surely significant that before this date he had done nothing on this side of the Channel to make known his links with the Impressionists (who are supposed to have influenced his whole life so profoundly), nor to help his Parisian artist friends—many of whom, as he so often insisted later, were greatly in need of money and encouragement—by finding English buyers for their works. However, once he had taken the plunge he never ceased talking and writing about them as though he had been the keeper of their innermost secrets. Their very names suddenly acquired 'a relish like a succulent fruit'. But we have seen the sort of uninformed gossip which it pleased him to write, and it is hardly surprising that, as a result, many of his French friends—Degas,



Zola, Goncourt, Mendès for example—declined to receive him again. On the other hand it appears that he failed even to impress his new English friends, for Dr. Emmons states that ‘to Sickert, Moore was always a subject of gay derision. His pronouncements on painting were treasured as delicious tit-bits of the sublimely ridiculous.’ Though he loved to talk about it he really understood nothing. But Moore had developed a fad for things French and above all, trading on his early experience, had begun to fancy himself as an expert in artistic matters. (This conviction grew indeed until ‘in later life he frequently complained that he had not been made a trustee of the National Gallery’.) And so by March 1891 he had either talked or written himself into the appointment as art critic on *The Speaker*. From this new eminence he continued to pronounce during the next four years—his last art article appeared on June 29th 1895—and in 1893 published the first selection of his articles in book form under the title *Modern Painting*. These extraordinary, glib essays attempt to cover a wide field and do, I believe, express all that he really felt about painting. Admittedly they contain flashes of good sense, generally in the context in which one least expects it, but they display an equal lack of historical knowledge and perspective, especially concerning his contemporaries, and seem to echo endlessly half-digested ideas picked up from others. This perhaps accounts for the lack of any positive or connecting theme, of any standards or principles consistently applied. They merely skim the surface of art without ever being penetrating or profound, without ever expressing a conception. Indeed it is impossible to extract from them Moore’s artistic philosophy (if he had one!) as their spirit is largely negative, a denying rather than an appraising of art. He indulges in long and rapturous passages of description, confusing art with morality; he deals out equal praise to Whistler, Millais, Steer (‘a born artist’), Charles Keene and Mark Fisher (‘the best, the only landscape painter of our time’); he propounds a violently nationalistic art doctrine (for which he was taken to task by Dr. McColl); he decries the French system of artistic education; he decides that ‘of all nineteenth-century painters, Ingres and Corot seem most sure of future life’; Manet is extolled for his *belle facture* but not for what he painted; Degas is said to be wilting and withering; he decides that, by comparison with English eighteenth-century or Dutch seventeenth-century painting,

French nineteenth-century painting (which he capriciously treats as the first maturity of French art), the creation of better brains 'and more pictorial talent', is as a whole less convincing because of the variety of forms of self-expression which it embraces and its 'absence of fixed principle', because for the first time in the history of art 'the subject has taken first place'. ('Modern painting is uninteresting because there is no innocence left in it' he was to write later in *Ave*.) In fact as a sub-title he might have quoted from himself and called the volume 'My tale of the decline and fall of French art in the nineteenth century'. For he was already convinced by 1892 that 'it was impossible to doubt any longer that the great French renaissance of the beginning of the century had worn itself out . . . French art had resolved itself into pedants and experimentalists.' In short, the one fact that ultimately emerges is his fundamental lack of sympathy with the art of his own period. He tries hard to disguise this prejudice by various laudatory references to some of the latest French painters, but they are always qualified—thus 'Monet has never known how to organize and control his values'—for in reality his sympathies were with the established reputations and the Old Masters.

A curious light is thrown on Moore's art criticism by J.-E. Blanche, one of his intimate friends, who in *Portraits of a Lifetime* recounts how, when Moore was asked to write an article *Souvenirs by Manet and Degas*, he thought he could 'write under that title' but asked Blanche to supply him with notes. 'All George Moore's articles on art at that time', he continues, 'were inspired by someone, and I was often the person to whom he applied for advice. He simply had no ideas and opinions of his own to help him out on the subject.' No wonder then that Moore felt that the time had come when he had to produce some more tangible proof of his connection with Impressionism. So, in 1896, he suddenly began to acquire a collection of pictures himself—'a grey portrait by Manet', 'a mauve morning by Monet' and a Berthe Morisot—though none of them was a painting of importance. In 1898 Pissarro wrote that Moore had arrived in Paris with 3,000 francs to buy Impressionist paintings (Manet and Degas) for a friend, but that by then nothing was to be bought for such a small sum: 'He will probably have to content himself with some unfledged Academicians. He has not come to see me. Why?' And in 1900 Sickert, writing to Steer, says that

Moore 'said to some Parisians he for his part had come to an age where he didn't care *what* other people thought; his own *personal independent* taste was, he liked Corot! . . . a pro-Boer in Trafalgar Square as it were! He wanted to buy a Renoir of a man with whiskers, for £200 or so! a bad portrait head.' So it does not seem that his taste improved with the passage of time and one can understand that he abandoned art criticism. In fact he was sufficiently embarrassed by these early efforts to omit *Modern Painting* from the collected edition of his works on the ground that it was 'too much of a tract for the times'.

However, in Dublin, whither Moore moved in 1900, he could easily maintain that he was 'the only one who knew Manet, Monet, Sisley, Renoir and Pissarro', and so when Hugh Lane, a collector-dealer and a man of remarkable taste, organized a modern French exhibition there in November 1904, Moore was invited to make a speech.

Possibly this was the finest collection of French pictures he had then seen, for his embarrassment in front of them was extreme, and the official Irish publications hardly refer to his oration. This speech, published in 1906 as *Reminiscences of the Impressionist Painters* and later incorporated in *Vale*, is again a singular piece of work, for though he was supposed to encourage subscriptions to purchase pictures for a new Gallery of Modern Art, he repeatedly emphasized the cheapness of Impressionist paintings twenty years earlier and deplored the fact that there were then no purchasers. Naturally he failed to explain why he himself had taken no steps to remedy this situation. After reciting various sententious platitudes about Manet he proceeded to dismiss Degas as 'merely a man of intellect' who, because he wearied of painting, 'turned to modelling for relaxation' and began to collect pictures. (Shades of Rubens and Sir Joshua Reynolds!) 'Of what value', he went on, 'are Degas' descriptions of washer-women and dancers and racehorses compared with that fallen flower, that Aubusson carpet, above all, the footstool?' Then for the first time he mentioned Renoir: 'Is he the equal of Manet? Good heavens, no! And indeed at the bottom of my heart I always suspect Renoir's art of a certain vulgarity.' Let us grant the partial truth of this comment provided due recognition has first been given to the greatness of Renoir's achievement; but this Moore omitted. However, he then uttered the most

significant passage, one which is obviously based on hearsay and which shows him most clearly trying to catch up with the times: 'I do not remember ever to have seen Cézanne at the Nouvelle Athènes; he was too rough, too savage a creature. . . . As no one took the least interest in his pictures he left them in the fields; when his pictures began to be asked for, his son and daughter used to inquire them out in the cottages, and they used to keep watch in the hedges and collect the sketches he had left behind him. . . . His work may be described . . . as art in delirium . . . I pause to ask myself which I would prefer—one of Millet's conventional simpering peasants or one of Cézanne's crazy corn-fields peopled with violet reapers.' This extraordinarily ignorant hotch-potch of gossip (incidentally, his only reference to Cézanne) with its all too obvious confusion between Cézanne and van Gogh, was pronounced, be it remembered, in the last year of Cézanne's life, and when van Gogh had already been dead fifteen years. Modern painting had lost its interest for Moore the literary man. He had reached the stage where, as the fame of the Post-Impressionists grew (and he never refers to any of them), it was safer to live by his memories of Manet, whose name he now mentioned on every possible occasion. In middle age Moore discovered a *raison d'être*, and it was quickly forgotten that his few Impressionist paintings (to which he had added works by Constable, Daubigny, Couture, Orpen, Steer, Conder and an Ingres drawing) had only been acquired as stage properties a few years previously. In his later writings he continued to echo and embroider the legends of the earlier ones, and when friends like Æ were not immediately impressed by his Manet he could always explain: 'Can you not see that the paint is spilt upon the canvas like cream—not brushed hither and thither with brushes—and that the suffused colour in a tea-rose is not more beautiful?'

'Oh, Moore!' would come the reply.

'Dear Æ,' he would answer, 'if you will not admire the beauty of Manet's paint, admire its morality.'

In discussing the question of Moore's musical sensibility his musical friend Edouard Dujardin said that he had no ear and that his interest in music was mainly literary. To this Colonel Moore added that 'what he wrote about music was what he heard others say'; while his friend O'Sullivan was convinced that 'his ignorance of musical theory, history and everything else was profound'.

Yet, as Mr. Hone remarks, Moore took such pains to 'mug up' any subject about which he wished to write, and was so adept at picking the brains of others that—as in the novels with a musical background like *A Mere Accident* and *Evelyn Innes*—he was in the end able to persuade even technical people that he really understood something. If this was true of his approach to music there seems little doubt, after a reconsideration of the facts, that it was equally true of his approach to painting, though as a result of his early practical experience he could handle it with a more professional air. But in fact he was neither closely observant, nor knowledgeable, and, though it would be an exaggeration to say that he was visually insensitive, it would be true to say that his powers of seeing were so limited by his literary obsession that he was not susceptible to an authentic visual shock. Even his writings show clearly that he was at a loss to understand the aims of any artist until they had been explained to him in intellectual terms. In so far as he conceived of himself as a highly polished man of broad-minded, frenchified taste he felt that it was essential to impress the world with the depth of his artistic culture. To this end he worked hard and succeeded in deluding a certain number of his contemporaries, as he will always succeed in deluding a certain number of his readers. Others, more sceptical, will dismiss his writings about art as did those of his contemporaries who put up with his ridiculous notions for the sake of enjoying his company. It is, nevertheless, odd to find a critic referring to him today as an informed connoisseur of French nineteenth-century painting, for in no sense can he be considered an authority. He was not even serious. It has not been my intention in this essay to discredit Moore (at his best an amusing commentator) nor indeed to mock him (so easy of achievement), but to try to sort out the facts. Thus, at the risk of appearing disproportionately thorough in its exposition of his weaknesses, this study will still have been worth while if it forestalls the creation of a legend.

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## JACQUES B. BRUNIUS

# NEITHER GOD NOR DEVIL<sup>1</sup>

## IV. TO ATHEISTS

I WANT to speak now to all those who, like myself, have no god. On the horizon I can discern little scattered groups of them. They have already ventured too far alone, unconcerned with what was happening behind them, detached from the enigmas they have solved for themselves, unconscious of the knots which still remain to be severed, blind to the hymeneals to be tied. They bear various labels, either adopted by themselves or given them by others. There are free-thinkers, agnostics, the irreligious, the impious, the anti-religious, unbelievers, anti-clericals, rationalists. Very few will consent to declare themselves atheists, a word still bearing a heavy burden of reprobation. There are also the nietzschcans. They have all my sympathy for they are out of luck: there is no subject and no man about whom people have talked and continue to talk more nonsense than about Nietzsche. The fact that the fascists have adopted him would be of no

<sup>1</sup> To be published by Fontaine Editions. The preceding chapters are entitled: I. Skull and Crossbones; II. Quartered Men; III. To a Christian.

importance—the catholics after all have appropriated Rimbaud—but the worst of it is that a lot of nit-wits have hastened to make a present of Nietzsche to the dictators, apparently without having read him. Let it pass. Not being a nietzschean, I leave it to the specialists to defend Nietzsche, but in passing I should like to say a few words to them. It was but normal and necessary, and to be foreseen, that during the process of man's emancipation a Nietzsche should have arisen to oppose in the most aggressive way all the powers relentlessly bent on crushing the individual, by the 'will to power' conceived on the individual plane. Moreover, the unconquerable disgust inspired by the nineteenth-century bourgeoisie, solely bent on gorging itself, could but result in restoring to the 'dangerous life' its prestige of chivalry. It is only by an odious fraud that the dictators lay claim to nietzschism, precisely in order to perpetuate the powers of oppression, objects of Nietzsche's revolt. Nationalists à la Barrès, transferring to the whole nation this impulse of individual aggressiveness, had already launched the same swindle. But whichever it is, the individual will to power or the national will to power, it destroys itself by the fact of having to compete with the will of other individuals, other leaders, other nations, other 'master-races'. The will to power, absolutely justifiable in so far as it tends to challenge the masochistic 'will to impotence' which disarms all too many of the oppressed and exploited, cannot however pass from the plane of volition to the plane of lasting reality except by being transcended into a collective, universal will to power, into collective man's will to power over nature and over himself. Whether he is a solitary hermit in a cave or a hereditary tyrant, a pope, demagogic general, hedonist or cynic, it is by virtue of a strange and enduring illusion that one man alone, even a genius, even with absolute power, can conceal from himself his own irremediable weakness. Only humanity is powerful, only a delusion prevents it from discovering its own power.

This long parenthesis, which I meant for the nietzscheans, brings me exactly to what I wanted to say to the rationalists, because I intend to converse with them on their bankruptcy before the demagogues of the irrational.

It is now nearly two centuries since human reason was charted. The Encyclopædists made a list of its contents, drew its outlines, appraised its limits, traced its graph. All that was then known of



the outside world, of its working, of the causal succession of events, of the determination of phenomena, naturally found its place within human reason and shaped its structure. Then came people who carefully labelled it all, arranged it in a museum, padlocked the glass cases and double-locked the door on human Reason. So-called rationalists sequestered the poor girl in this increasingly dusty abode and forbade her the slightest contact with the illuminati, the seductive visionaries who wander in the streets and in their minds, who haunt laboratories, painters' studios, popular meetings, and who die in an attic or at a barricade. Pseudo-rationalists have confiscated Reason. And yet, through the centuries she had reached the age of reason only by being aware of all currents of thought. She was no less beholden to alchemists and astrologers than to navigators and doctors, no less to Paracelsus than to Descartes. In her veins flowed the blood of mystics and saints as much as that of scientists and philosophers, of poets, witches and regicides, of law-makers and village idiots. She was human Reason only because, blending within herself the behaviour of the seer and of the logician, that of the prophet and of the determinist, she never consented to check her advance nor to abandon one of her guides to follow the other.

You who claim to be rationalists, you who have cloistered reason and *closed* rationalism, open your eyes a little on the world we live in, turn round a moment to see the trail you have left. Full of disdain, you have allowed the magi and the mystics to drift away from you. You have thought yourselves the only atheists, and you have never noticed that among mystics and visionaries there were atheists more genuine than you. You thought to confound religions, but they have known so well how to take the same road as you on the way to rationalization that they continue to prosper with the help of the weapons you have given them. Not only do they beat you on your own ground, but ultimately you are nearer to religion than are certain mystics.

You thought to imprison science in an ice-bound causalism and determinism. De Vries had only to provoke a biological mutation and Heisenberg to state the uncertainty relation, for fideism to raise its head again and introduce through the window the finger of God on which you thought you had slammed the door. Your *closed* rationalism imperils rationalism itself, it is no longer capable of embracing the rational of today, you



have surrounded it with customs barriers to protect it from what, irrational at this instant, will be rational the next minute. I demand the re-establishment of free trade in all the domains of thought.

Understand that though I address myself generally to those who call or think themselves rationalists, my words are not aimed at the bourgeois rationalist for whom human reason, at the end of her adventure, has finally run aground on a neatly ruled strand, where signs, which one would be greatly mistaken in thinking cabalistic, are traced in roundhand. The ferocious and comfortable rationalism of Debit and Credit has for long been fit only for the guillotine and not for discussion. No, I want those whose whole reason is on fire with a passion for justice to hear these words, in which I have tried to put all the rigour, all the brutality and all the stringency that I owe to my friends.

You have thought it decorous not to allow Reason to gad about, and for fear she should get a child by a mesmerist or a Swedenborgian you have preferred to set up house for her with profiteers and parvenus so that she will the more inevitably become bourgeoisie. And after all you have set her up in fine style. This upper-class Reason is received everywhere, in the drawing-rooms and alcoves, in the banks and champagne brothels of the rationalist bourgeoisie. She even keeps a little bag of valuables round her neck under her chemise.

But you have forgotten that people do not like marriages of reason. Like ostriches you have wanted to ignore the irrational impulses of man. What would you think of the lens polisher who would not admit the necessity for chromatic corrections, or of the artilleryman who refused to allow for lateral deviation? And yet their mistakes would be small compared with yours.

During a good third of his existence man dreams: no one knows exactly in what proportion work, intoxication, desire, the marvellous, share the other two thirds, and yet society claims to establish psychological rules and social laws that govern only utilitarian work and reasonable actions, where emotional factors, not having been allowed for, are supposed to play no part. Do not tell me all that is just a question of ruling-class conventions and ruling-class laws, and that you have had nothing to do with them. You are a party to these conventions so long as you uphold the same *closed* rationalism as inspires them. It will be specious for you to argue your will to overthrow this decadent civilization so

long as you cannot set against it a fresh reason, full, and yet still avid for what is new: a child's reason.

'One must have been one of the smouldering crowd at a time of revolutionary action or dramatic events to be able to understand the degree of sensibility the mind can attain when it surrenders itself to the violence of collective passion. A crowd is a multiplication, not an addition,' writes Pierre Mabillet in his *Miroir du Merveilleux*. And he adds: 'Emotional intensity, the primordial factor in the dynamism of the masses, prevents scientific history from understanding the origins of revolutions and religions. Everything is absurd if one confines oneself to official memoranda and administrative reports, and yet nothing is absurd, for on the whole, the blaze of passion gives more light than any sensible advice.'

I do not deny that your average reason is sufficient for you to account for most of the facts of everyday life. I appreciate at its just worth its usefulness in times of calm, at an equal distance between two crises, emotional and social. Newtonian mechanics suffice to explain the world on a life-size scale, but cease to be exact on the scale of the microcosm as well as on that of the macrocosm. The same can be said, but far more seriously, of your immutable reason. Your reason must confess to failure before most of the great manifestations of human behaviour which at the time are commonly called 'irrational', whether they are to do with love or war, with murder or panic, with revolution or idolatry for a man.

And yet these 'irrational' impulses exist, and in choosing to ignore them—as if knowledge of them and their integration with the rational was not one of the most urgent aims of reason itself—you have denied yourselves the benefit of some, the control of others; you have refused the task of guiding or directing them, of cultivating their seed or of sucking out their poison: you have left the usufruct to the lowest riff-raff. You have neglected the blaze of light which some of these moments of passion have the virtue of casting upon reason.

Finally, you have made your so-called, your *closed* Reason, so morose and have shown her up as being so powerless, that you have estranged from her a constantly growing number of reasonable beings; you have flung them back into darkness and into the clutches of the worst adventurers, who have had a clear field. Do you realize that you bear a very great responsibility for the

unleashing of the present cataclysm in which universal reason may well be engulfed? Two centuries ago, with the growth of rationalism, humanity thought it could already see the close of the era of *divine* right, and its cortège of arbitrary rule fade away. Nevertheless it is this same rationalism which, because it has been allowed to become jejune and atrophied, has brought us to the epoch of tyrants by *human* right.

The ideas about tyrants which still prevail today date from antiquity, and are still impregnated with the illusion that a leader must be imposed from above or from outside. Modern reality is tragically otherwise. The present-day tyrant is indeed proposed, financed and supported by powers above or abroad, but because this fact must not become known he affects an open hostility towards these powers. He incessantly overstates this hostility the more easily to conceal the protection which enables him to organize costly propaganda, fanaticize his followers and create his myth. He is then swept to power, not by the direct intervention of his protectors, but by the bewildered multitude, fuddled with demagoguery. The modern tyrant gets himself elected by plebiscite; his allowing himself the luxury of juggling with the percentages by terrorism and corruption, and of falsifying the results, might for a moment be mistaken for vanity rather than for lack of certainty; for if collective excitement has been carefully worked up his majority must be assured. In reality, the use of intimidation by terror is needed chiefly to hasten success, but in most cases the modern tyrant can, at a given moment, get himself plebiscited with no faking. This does not mean that terrorism is an unnecessary luxury for him and that he is not obliged to be ready to use it, knowing as he does in advance that a small part only of his promises will be kept, and that he could not face a second plebiscite nor even guarantee his power without physically crushing his adversaries and bribing his supporters.

Let no one venture to make use of the above lines to accuse such and such a people of being afflicted with the racial peculiarity of a taste for oppression. No people has ever given itself a dictator for the simple pleasure of being oppressed. An analysis of the sado-masochistic complex which develops in the masses during the advent of a dictatorship would reveal a whole in which the wish for emancipation, acceptance of submission through fear of responsibility and liberty, the will to dominate, selfishness and

the giving of oneself to the community, are so intermingled that I defy anyone to give ascendancy to a single one of these contradictory trends. In the whole world there is not one people who cannot be brought to an adventure of this sort by a long period of poverty, a strong enough dose of humiliation, an all-prevailing despair. Its racial peculiarities or its democratic traditions will make no difference. It would be impossible to cite a people more enamoured of independence, more imbued with democratic traditions and revolutionary experiences than the different men who go to make up the French nation, and yet it is this very people who had the sad privilege, in the nineteenth century alone, of giving to the world the spectacle of three successive aberrations: bonapartism, badinguism and boulangierism.<sup>1</sup> And it was not only the former revolutionary townsfolk of Etienne Marcel,<sup>2</sup> now grown into the decadent middle-classes, who cheered and hung out flags, but also the very people of the Jacqueries and the Commune.

Bonapartism has taken on very different shapes in spreading through the world: sergeants' dictatorships, colonels' régimes, generals' pronunciamientos, presidential power, solitary tyrannies: and its face *here* has become more hideously distorted than *there*. But observe how immutable are some of its features. Except for the Mikado there exists nowhere a leader descended from heaven by a more or less ancient heredity. Nowadays we see none but leaders who emerge from the crowd, to rise little by little towards divinity. The Archimedean buoyancy of popular idolatry hoists them to such a level that they can be looked upon only as exceptional beings, therefore vaguely divine, unless an emotional counter-current should come to interrupt their ascension. And I envy, without sharing it, the optimism of those who hope to circumvent the epidemic merely by Hitler's downfall.

It is in fact a religious phenomenon which is taking place, comparable in many ways to the brewing of such myths as those of Jesus Christ or of Quetzalcoatl. First, the coming of the Messiah, conceived in a long period of neurotic despair, is sublimated into

<sup>1</sup> Badinguet, popular name of Napoleon III. General Georges Boulanger, leader of the nationalist party and War Minister in 1886. His plot against the Third Republic failed. (*Translator's note.*)

<sup>2</sup> Etienne Marcel, provost (mayor) of Paris, presented to the States General in 1356 plans for democratic reforms. He stirred up the Parisians to revolt against the Dauphin, and imprisoned him in the Hôtel de Ville. (*Translator's note.*)

an anxious expectancy. Then comes the man whom legend will deify. The rescue of human reason demands an elucidation of the religious phenomenon, not merely a negation of it. It is all up with man's most immediate future if it is not understood that beyond the issue of the present conflict the general crisis—of which this war, as much on the ideological as on the economic plane, is but a minor episode—must be surmounted.

## V. FOR AN ENCYCLOPÆDIA: AGAINST THE ACADEMIES

'Thus, because brains are insufficiently scoured of Christianity and its scabs, it seems, at the end of this first third of the twentieth century, that the Encyclopædia must be rewritten.'—RENÉ CREVEL—*Le Clavecin de Diderot*, 1932.

I remember writing one day, in about 1931 I think: 'All that is done against religion is well done'. Today I confess that I was grossly mistaken. For centuries all that has been done against religion has not only been nearly always badly done, but must be started completely afresh. It is not enough, as I then thought, heedlessly to pile up reasonings, professions of atheism or anti-religious sallies in the hope that sooner or later brains would scrape themselves clean. If this sufficed I can think of nothing with a more ravaging power of negation to any religion than the admirable question: 'Could God, who is omniscient and omnipotent, create a stone so heavy that he could not lift it?'

But even 'God's' suicide would not cure the neurosis of religion. The real problem of divinity no longer seems to me to reside in the personification of the forces of nature, the forces outside man. Knowledge of these forces has tended to depersonalize them more and more and to strip them of their more threatening aspect. Goethe's *Erlikönig* could be rewritten: it is rather the psychological process of *inner* secession which conditions the general anguish of today.

The illness approached its acute state only with the almost universal triumph of monotheism, substituting intellectual for childlike religions. Until then all that was divine and sacred remained outside man, it did not seriously encroach on his inner self. There was no precise connection between the gods and prevailing ideas of human ethics. The multiplicity of gods and the extreme diversity of rites and worship guaranteed man's

indivisibility. The attempt to condense all the gods into one started the dislocation which up to the present has grown steadily worse. All the would-be monotheisms, despite their pretensions and their despairing efforts, have in fact merely ended up with an irreducible dualistic 'ditheism', and all the theological wrangling for the last two thousand years has really revolved round this unavowed contradiction.

Having ascribed to god his own power over the world and his own aspirations, having assigned to the devil his own weaknesses and those of his private impulses he most reproves, man is torn by forces he has expelled from himself, and has lost all hope of sizing up their respective values. He would have been able to grapple with the solution of his *inner* contradictions: once outside him he can only fall a victim to them. Man, ceasing to revere the outside world and other beings, more and more often creates gods in his own image, yields to a fallacious desire for unity and quenches his thirst for mythology at the unique fountain of an anthropomorphic god; indulging in this monstrous egotism, he gives himself up to the ineluctable consequences of his narcissism: the oppression of man by man; the oppressor, in its widest meaning, being either god, others or oneself.

Thus the two outstanding events in man's religious and moral history are, on the one hand, the creation of the first god with a human face, first symbolization of oppression, and on the other, the myth of the incarnation of god in man—as for instance Christian mythology puts before us with its Jesus—followed by demoniac possession and mystic marriage as its natural corollaries. Nothing can be more mystifying than such a symbol where the *centripetal* myth of god or the devil penetrating man hides in fact the evisceration of man's conscience, a *centrifugal* projection of the values of Good and Evil.

Man, having invented fire, thinks he is damned for having stolen it from heaven: having invented the wheel he timidly fastens that which will crush him to the Chariot of Destiny.

Man, who has invented the lightning conductor and the Belisha beacon, kills other men in the name of his god, invents the tank and the flame-thrower the better to extirpate the demon in another's belly.

Through the arenas, the stake, the crusades, holy mass and war, man, doubly stifled by the bicoloured winding-sheet of Good and

Evil and the shroud of Predestination embroidered with motifs of Divine Grace, lives like an ant and dies like a sucker.

And yet, from Manichee the Persian who was flayed alive, to the Dutch Jansenius who died symbolically of a plague which he was said to have contracted by handling old theological books, an unbroken tremor of human revolt runs through several centuries of moral oppression, unbroken and increasing, whose waves today lap furiously the unlit skies of the catechisms.

Rebels just as much as the insurgents of Spartacus were the heroic Manicheans, massacred in hundreds of thousands during eight hundred years, and whose torment was to rise again in the admirable civilization of the troubadours, to burst into brightest flame during the catharist quest for the Grail. If they wanted to remain christian (and they had not yet the moral temerity to brave their century to the point of declaring themselves atheists), the sole resource of the Albigenes and Vaudois was to identify Gold and the Corruption of the World with the devil, to drown their precious metals in lakes, and to preach the extinction of the human race. As the only heroic and logical attempt to reduce to absurdity the absurd christian dualism, the catharist heresy still exercises its fascination on all rebels pledged to man's emancipation.

And even when a mathematical genius—passing from the theory of probability to the Jansenist postulate of grace—peters out with the illusion of one among so many other sorts of christian rationalism, Pascal's revolt is neither more significant nor more moving than de Sade's. Leaving behind them the tinsel of their century, in the seclusion of illness or of prison, both drank at the same spring, then each went on his different way, bound to the same moral equation.

Since Pascal, who attempted to reconcile man with god, the attenuated voice of the great heresies reaches us only through the lineage of the Jansenist convulsionaries of Saint-Médard, the Bonjourists eating their bread-and-excrement, and the disquieting hysterics created out of nothing by Charcot.<sup>1</sup> Sade's

<sup>1</sup> The persecuted Jansenists claimed that miracles took place at the tomb of the Jansenist deacon, François de Paris, in the cemetery of Saint-Médard. The crowd assembled there went into convulsions, some of them prophesied, women leaped about, barked, miaowed, had themselves crucified, etc.

The Bonjour brothers, founders of a small heretical sect at the end of the eighteenth century. (*Translator's note.*)



voice has echoed louder and louder through the vaults where roams the genius of the splendid nineteenth century. Quivering balls on the mental billiard-table, Shelley, Lautréamont, Marx, Nerval, Rimbaud, Swinburne, Freud, Lenin, transmit to us the shock of the only heresy likely to endure, the great modern heresy of liberation, the heresy of atheism. Man tears off in shreds the christian tunic of Nessus, not without tearing painfully his own skin. More than one gives up halfway; millions of others lose themselves in new mystical labyrinths. Naked at last, face to face with the naked world, shaken with fear, man seeks another shelter, no matter what. Deprived of god and seized with panic man deifies a man: *Mikado*, *Führer*, *Leader* or *Chef*: or an entity—nation, empire, race or Reich. Ever since the trauma of light, cold and drought at his birth, man has been used to changing his shirt, taking off one only to put on another. For centuries his habit has been to abandon one myth only to create a new one. After each *élan* towards nakedness, light, freedom, atheism, man falls back into a shirt, into mud and chains, into religion, before he can spring forward again. On casting off Egypto-Græco-Roman paganism, occidental man found almost no difficulty in donning the new shirt christianity had woven for him. Twentieth-century man has not yet created the human myth he needs in place of the divine. The transition from Pharaoh to pope, from Jupiter to god, from Isis and Venus to the virgin Mary was comfortably managed for our fathers. Indeed, they noticed the difference so little that worship of the Black Virgin was carried on almost to our day, and Priapus, disguised as Saint-Foutin, still stirred the bowels of our great-grandmothers. There is no need to go into ecstasies over the farsightedness or the genius of the priests of that time. Their task was quite easy, and lay merely in exchanging one oppression for another. The task of the great thinkers of today is nothing less than to change a myth of oppression for one of liberation—for a myth that allows man to escape from god without selling his soul to the devil—a myth which does not leave man, freed from god, alone with himself—a collective *mystique* whereby the individual will be mystified neither by collectivity nor by a leader—a myth where neither *capital* nor *captain* are synonyms for virility—a myth of moral and material liberation, where order and disorder become one and the same activity.

No wonder the great doctors of today are still unable to fulfil their task: it is beyond the potentialities of a single man, and they are still scattered to the four corners of the world of thought. The creation of a modern myth coincides with the problem of knowledge. Philosophers, physicists, mathematicians, astronomers, chemists, doctors, biologists, economists, psychologists, painters, engineers, architects, revolutionaries, poets and lovers—each selfishly keeps to himself his own share of present-day knowledge. Only from their encounter can the myth be born, from their work and suffering in common and from their joys shared. Like political, economic or social revolutions, like scientific or philosophic upheavals, moral revolutions may be conceived by one alone, but must be fulfilled in a collective parturition.

Here as elsewhere segmentation is rife. Moral man is but half a man, but *homo sapiens* has split himself into an infinite number of specialists.

What a spectacle the world of today offers us with the welders who can no longer use a screw-driver, the surgeons who, if they have learnt to remove a tumour of the brain, hardly remember how to set a fractured thigh-bone; the physicists whose absorption in the neutron does not allow them to take any interest in thermodynamics, the anthropologist for whom the study of a South Seas tribe is too exacting for him to observe the rites of children playing in his street, the genetician and the psychologist, pursuing, in opposite directions, one the *germ-cell* and the other the *libido*, who will never realize that perhaps their ways will converge.

In 1939 I tried to give the alarm in a film called *Violon d'Ingres*. I contrasted this increasing specialization with the disinterested activities which still tend to fill the leisure of people gifted with enduring youth.

At the time the above lines were taking me to the core of this problem, I received from New York one of André Breton's recent texts in which appreciably parallel views are expressed:

'Not only have words fallen into crazy laxity, not only, as Rougemont says, "Our language is out of gear", but what may be considered the master-minds of our time are no longer expert except in *their own line*: they think nothing of negating themselves if one tries to take them out of their own sphere. Notice that it was quite different in the so hastily decried period of the Middle Ages. Today we are confronted at least by this double problem: the meaning of words to be recovered; I am not mad enough to say universal knowledge, but at least the appetite for universal knowledge to be

rediscovered.'—ANDRÉ BRETON—*Situation du Suréalisme entre les deux guerres*—VVV, Nos. 2-3.

One of the principal obstacles which seem to me to be in the path of this rediscovery is the individualism which has taken possession of minds most gifted in every sphere. This attitude can result in nothing but the slow wasting away of mind and knowledge. The conception of genius and invention is more and more surrounded by a superstition which demands their isolation, an isolation which becomes the condition and price of the glory attached to genius and invention. The least little bungler, whether he uses brush, fountain-pen or microscope, would think himself unworthy of the fame he covets if he consented to share in its pursuit.

The amount of reprobation earned by surrealism for such scandalous customs as that of several people writing one poem, or of failing to sign a composite drawing of the 'cadavre exquis' sort, is well known. The mere thought of a 'group' was enough to make all the daubing and versifying guinea-fowls utter shrieks of horror.

It is time that the practice of collective research was extended to all fields of knowledge. I demand the forming of groups: the biologist who already needs a statistician to help him must not be afraid to work with a painter. And as biology is henceforth inseparable from chemistry, which cannot do without physics, in its turn the prisoner of mathematics, I ask that these groups shall of necessity be compounded of specialists of all known specialities, and of all those which will assert their use in the future. Tomorrow no economist will dare to write a line or draw a curve without asking the advice of a poet.

Only thus can we avoid the oppression of man by the specialist and of the specialist by his speciality.

Only thus can we reintegrate words into a language, a myth, a universal desire. Even so we shall be very far from recovering wholly the sense of life, that is, of liberty; at the most we shall have retempered one of the tools of our emancipation.

*London. March to July 1943*

[Translated from the French by Mary Kesteven.]

## SELECTED NOTICES

*English Story*. Edited by Woodrow Wyatt. Collins. 7s. 6d.

*The Windmill*. Edited by Reginald Moore and Edward Lane. Heinemann. 6s.

*The Ballad and the Source*. By Rosamond Lehmann. Collins. 9s. 6d.

*In Tyrannos*. Lindsay Drummond. 16s.

MAJOR WOODROW WYATT, editor of *English Story*, has contributed to the fifth series a short piece called 'Before the Invasion' which is neither a preface nor a story but a statement of post-war aims and values in the form of a parliamentary debate. Various opinions are expressed here in a non-committal way that does not conclusively identify the writer with any of them. The general idea seems to be that, having touched bottom in the act 'Global Warfare' now being presented, we must make sure that it is followed by a more edifying show. So far so good, of course: but how is the new performance to be produced?

If I interpret 'Before the Invasion' correctly, the clue is to be found in the last paragraph. 'Facts are there as they are and situations cannot be wiped out, but they can be modified and changed. . . . It is determination and the will and enlightened action that is the new beginning, that is the rejuvenator. It is acceptance but aggressive acceptance not avoidance that is the staple.'

Acceptance is all right, and so is a new beginning; but rejuvenation is not the same thing as a new beginning if a new beginning implies a fresh start. Indeed, on the penultimate page of 'Before the Invasion' one reads: 'There are no fresh starts, no clean breaks, only continuations.'

That is an attitude which fills me with alarm. I do not like at all the idea that a new life can be built up on the old foundations. As I see it, the new life must detach itself from the past completely, in the same way that a detached fragment of matter flies off from the sun to establish its own orbit. I do not like at all this talk of modifications. What is needed is not a modified past, an indecent mechanical imitation of something dead, but a blazing new sun, a creation wholly and dynamically new. Reconstruction is useless: rejuvenation is useless: blood transfusions are no good at all. What is wanted is a new earth and a new man to inhabit the earth.

It is not impossible. It can be achieved. But only one thing will bring it about, and that is a change of heart. Man has got to give up being dead. He has got to give up being a mindless machine part. He has got to change himself into a living man, a real live human being in the full and true sense of the word. Like all changes it will have to come from within; and Woodrow Wyatt implies this when he writes: 'efforts must be internal before they can be external'.

A living being can only be made by God, by a change of heart which galvanizes every drop in the bloodstream. Man has got to recognize God in his own heart, and then like God he can start creating the world anew. That is the only way the present act can be changed for a better production. Anything else will lead to catastrophe.

The stories which Major Wyatt has collected in this book do not, I fear, give much indication of the change being imminent. In fact, the word 'change' is

not aptly applied to them in any sense. Although the actual writing is in all of them adequate and in several above the average, they follow conventional psychological patterns. They have nothing new to tell us in the language of the subconscious.

Elizabeth Bowen heads the list with her picture of an unresolved father complex. Denton Welch convincingly describes a young boy consumed by jealous love for his mother. The horror stories by William Sansom and Henry Treece both fall into the category of objectified anxiety dreams. Persistence of an infantile sadism is suggested by Dorothy Haynes' concentration on a girl torturing a trapped rat. Mary Lavin's gay garrison town Miss stands for the flight from reality, The efficient work of Rex Warner, Rhys Davies and the rest can be placed under headings equally familiar. This psychological classification does not mean that the stories themselves are constructed on a basis of psychological awareness. Many of them are incompletely worked out from the subconscious angle, the motivating complexes unexplained, the characterization negligible, the general pattern confused. Psychological awareness implies a certain standard of spiritual growth. But one has the impression that these writers have not yet developed their own personalities to the point of being able to create characters realistic enough to inspire a story with meaning. The individuals whom they describe remain nebulous; one does not know whether the personality traits which govern their actions are dominantly normal or paranoid or obsessional or depressive or manic; one does not see their movements or hear them speak.

Alyse Gregory, writing in another collection of short pieces *The Windmill*, uses a phrase which might be applied to some of the contributors to this periodical as well as to the authors I have just mentioned. Her excellent essay 'The Function of the Critic' contains the words: 'Life escapes while the pen races': and certainly a number of contemporary writers do seem to be using their talent as a form of escapism, which again is a manifestation of immaturity. It is this trace of infantilism which makes their stories unconvincing and the actors in them lifeless as puppets manipulated to suit a personal conflict. These young authors seem still to be playing at life like children playing at wars, and the eidola of themselves which they project into writing are no more than dummy figures without tragedy or individual distinction. They have not yet discovered that it is not enough to possess technical ability and the will to create a story: that in order to write it is first necessary to live. They are, as Henry Miller says in his contribution 'From the Rosy Crucifixion', 'all guilty of crime, the great crime of not living life to the full'.

Miller, at any rate, is an author who is acutely aware of the possibilities and the importance of psychology in modern writing. One might almost say that he exploits the psychological situation, as, for instance, when he debunks psycho-analysis and presents it as the disease of those who make it their profession. His description of Dr. Kronski's analysis is immensely vivid, immensely entertaining, immensely cynical. It seems hardly fair to subject the rest of the contents of *The Windmill* to comparison with his enormous enthusiasm, beside which the style of most English authors is apt to appear either pedestrian or academic.

Elizabeth Bowen is again among the contributors. The writings of Arturo

Barea and Hugo Manning display the quiet sincerity of genuine emotional experience. Alex Comfort from the side of the under-dog propounds his theory of general social madness. There is a number of poems; but these, with the possible exception of the three by Kenneth Patchen, are without harmony of sound or pattern and seem to belong in feeling to the preanalytical period of the Georgian poets who replaced imagery by conceptual forms. On the whole, *The Windmill* is more valuable for its intellectual than its artistic standard. Essays and critical articles constitute its principal interest and the level of these is high. (Although I disagree mildly with most of what Ranjee G. Shahani writes on Rabindranath Tagore, and emphatically with the specific analogy he draws between the venerable poet and Havelock Ellis's document which becomes interesting because it 'dates'.)

It is not entirely inappropriate that Rosamond Lehmann's novel should be mentioned here because the episodic technique employed in its construction has something in common with the short story. *The Ballad and the Source* is a long book, written mainly in dialogue, full of subtle and often beautiful detail. Miss Lehmann's virtuosity is impressive; one is compelled to admire her fluency and her technical skill: and, apart from the interest of the actual narrative, this novel throws an intriguing sidelight on an odd aspect of the English character.

Mrs. Jardine, the heroine of the book, defines the word 'convention' as another name for the habits of society. 'When a habit is bad it should be broken', she says: and the greater part of her life is spent in disrupting the conventional design on the acceptance of which the comparative freedom of England largely depends. The Englishman escapes tyranny because he accepts the code of his class and shuns the dangers of original thought. Even if his conduct deviates from the common formula the divergence is usually only a pseudo-individualism, an eccentricity, an exhibitionist quirk. His inmost self remains safely anchored in the traditional harbour. And this appears to be true of Mrs. Jardine. She splashes out into the open sea, not for the sake of hearing its wild music, but in order to startle and to attract attention, always keeping a weather eye on the anchorage. She has adventures, takes lovers, is even a little mad. But not because her individual impulse compels her towards these things. She is unconventional for unconventionality's sake. Her admirers thrill in their sure and sanctified haven, vicariously enjoying her escapades. Individualism, even of the imitation variety, is to the tradition-worshipping Englishman the modern sin at which he peeps from afar in horrified fascination.

Miss Lehmann brings all this out very clearly in the composite picture of her heroine. But Mrs. Jardine is a sensation-seeker more than an individual; she is experimenting with life instead of living it fully: her experiences, being psychologically unexplained, appear unco-ordinated, spasmodic, and lacking in natural rhythm. Some essential element has been omitted, without which the personality picture cannot be brought to life. The picture obstinately stays a picture right to the end. And because Mrs. Jardine never quite becomes a real person, her disjointed history is also without real emotional significance. In spite of the technical excellence of its construction *The Ballad and the Source* fails, ultimately, to stimulate and engage the deeper attention.

It is not easy to divert one's mind suddenly from fiction to the consideration

of life and death realities and the thoughts and fate of a people: but I particularly want to mention *In Tyrannos* because of its topical and universal importance. The book is a symposium in which fifteen well-known German writers now in this country have illustrated, through the example of famous compatriots, the struggle for political and personal liberty which has gone on in Germany for four centuries. That struggle, as we know, has been unsuccessful. Here one is struck once more by the ubiquitous and fundamental significance of personality: for it is the very intensity of German individualism that has brought about its defeat. The individualist in Germany refuses to compromise: unlike the Englishman, he will not accept either social or political conventions. And the absolute nature of his resistance carries as a corollary the sadism, the brutality, the unspeakable violence of the reactionary force which seeks at all costs to destroy spontaneous life. As one reads this book it is impossible not to admire the tenacious idealism which for hundreds of years has maintained a continuous battle against oppression, preserving the flame of intellectual freedom which elsewhere succumbed to the stifling dead-weight of puritanism. For the astonishing fact emerges that Germany alone among European nations has kept alive the humanistic ideas which inspired the great men of the Renaissance period. Of Germany only can it be truly said that the war against dictatorship has been waged all along, not simply for material objectives, but for the soul of the individual human being, whether worker or intellectual.

The ideology of humanism with its mystical bias may seem unfamiliar and perhaps unacceptable to English readers. But if German characteristics are to be changed, understanding of the German character is surely essential. And in order to understand the German character it is necessary to obtain an accurate picture of the cultural, and especially of the philosophical, background which has influenced its development. Before theorizing about 're-education'—which is only a clumsy word for a change of heart—one should be able to think in psychological and biological as well as in national and economic terms.

One of the chief values of *In Tyrannos* is that it clarifies much obscurity; as well as eliminating many false concepts and phrases which the Nazis and enemies of freedom everywhere have deliberately distorted in an attempt to prejudice foreign opinion against their victims. Darkness is danger; and this book lights up dark places so far unexplored. Therefore it should be read: not only by those who concern themselves with the re-education of Germans; but by anyone who dares to own the god in his own heart: for even now it is not too late to change the heart of the world.

ANNA KAVAN



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